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TRANSMIGRATION.

BY

MORTIMER COLLINS,

AUTHOR OF

"MARQUIS AND MERCHANT,"

&c. &c.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar."

WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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TRANSMIGRATION.

CHAPTER I.

MARS.

The Castle hall was marvellous high,
Its ceiling sky, and yet not sky;
Its front a single window-pane,
Bright as fire and keen as ice:
Higher it was than Sarum vane,
Wider it was than sanguine Seine,
From a diamond vast a thin-cut slice.
Thin! 'Twas thinner, the Sisters knew,
Than any rose-leaf that ever grew,
Than leaf of gold that is hammered flat,
Than gauzy wing of the dancing gnat,
Than the haze in summer that veils the holt—
Yet would it flatten a thunderbolt.
Sweet to see the long light slant
Through that infrangible adamant.

The Ladder of Light.

I AWOKE. I found myself free from all the evils and wrappages of humanity.

I was in a great hall, whose floor and roof and sides were all transparent—translucent; through them I could see the earth below (for this hall was suspended in mid-air) and the planets above, and the battle of the winds outside.

I could not see myself—I was formless, and traversed ether like a flame. It was a new sensation, and a very pleasant one. To get rid of one's clothes at eventide is no common luxury; but to get rid of the body, the spirit's clothing, that precious old suit for which one feels one was never properly measured, is a delight unutterable. I enjoyed being immaterial, and heartily hoped it would last.

The magnificent Hall of Spirits wherein I found myself was a palace of light and beauty. It was immense; its walls were thin slices of diamonds, thin as a butterfly's wing, cut from stones of enormous size,

which would have appalled the terrestrial diamond merchant—who is usually also a bill-discounter. Not long had I regarded the scene around me, when another flying flame came close to me, and I learnt by strange intuition (no words being spoken) where I was, and what I must be. This shapeless wonder of the sky was a messenger-angel; from him I learnt that, before returning to the earth in another shape, I must pass a certain time in another star. *I could choose my own star!*

This was confoundedly embarrassing. There was not only the whole solar system at my service, but also Sirius and Aldebaran and Rigol, and a great many other stars about which one would like some information. I thought at first of trying the lost Pleiad, being of opinion that lost stars, like lost women, are those most easily found; but I finally decided in favour of the planet

Mars. "It comes within forty-six million miles of the earth," I said to myself, "and that's like being a next-door neighbour among planets." I confess that I longed for my own old planet. What with Radicals and wiseacres, our globe is rather used up; but I like it very much, and I never so thoroughly understood my liking as when I was in the glorious diamond-built Hall of Spirits. I felt that it would be an unspeakable luxury to have legs and arms again, and to drink vile beer in a wayside inn of England! My experience is that the spirit gets chilly without the body, and that the finest aërial arrangements compensate not for the loss of one's own book-room and wine-cellars. The Hall of Spirits was a splendid bit of architecture; but you could not call it snug. I, although divested of my corporeal attire, felt that I should prefer a little comfort to all this radiancy. I

wished myself back at Five Tree Hill.

Many flying flames passed through the Hall of Spirits while I was there, and by their colours I learnt to know them. That mysterious messenger, Raphael the hierarch, kept close to me awhile. From him I learnt that the red flames were the spirits of men of war, the green flames of men who loved the common things of earth, the blue flames of those who delighted in the aërial realms of poetry. The intermediate tints denoted heterogeneous intellects. An Emperor came through the Hall of Spirits while I was there, and his flame was of an orange colour. In him had blended the green of earthly delight and the red of fierce warfare.

I cannot explain how it was I learnt from Raphael the innumerable things he had to tell me. No words passed. Our flames blended—that was all. The junction mys-

terious told me all I wished to know. I learnt that almost all the spirits coming from Earth, or any other star, passed through the water of Lethe, and forgot altogether what had previously occurred to them. None were excepted, save those who heartily believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis; I, being such a believer (the only one during more than a century), was to be rewarded by a return to earth, with my memory of previous events perfectly clear. But this not yet. I was to abide awhile in the Hall of Spirits; thence I was to pass to the planet I had chosen, and spend some time there.

I confess that I very much liked the arrangement. In time my home-sick fancy for earth faded away, and I grew satisfied with this radiant dwelling between sky and sea. An existence entirely free from all the inconveniences of earthly life has much

to recommend it. A flame-like spirit cannot well be worried with rheumatism or creditors; the *Saturday Review* does not reach the Hall of Spirits. That Hall is a glorious and delicious place of rest; it is every way translucent. Below, through the diamond floor, the earth lies beneath you, and, as it revolves on its axis, city after city, country after country, become visible. Looking down through the clear air, you can see the very places you knew on earth; I made out Five Tree Hill, and wondered who had come to live at Beau Sejour.

Then around us was the infinite æther, sometimes cool blue, sometimes darkened by storm, sometimes filled with amazing colour by sunrise or sunset. Vast birds of lovely plumage and most melodious song were often seen and heard. From Raphael I learnt that the upper air is inhabited by

innumerable birds, which never descend on the earth. They haunt the atmosphere far above the peaks of the highest mountains, and make their nests on asteroids, which perpetually revolve through the higher regions of the earth-encircling air.

Looking upward through the adamantine ceiling, we saw stars swimming in the calm blue sky; and, by some strange power of the diamond disc, it was possible to see who dwelt in those stars, and what manner of people they were. The creatures inhabiting them widely differed—the inhabitants of Jupiter being of somewhat a Johnsonian turn, while creatures of a lighter type resided in Mercury. The people of Venus were very much like the inhabitants of our own planet, but perhaps slightly more erotic.

Through the wondrous roof we saw this universe of planetary life; through the floor

was visible the revolving earth, with all its events, so important to the people dwelling there, so intensely unimportant to a disembodied spirit. Once live without material clothing, and you become thoroughly convinced of the absurdity of those wars in which people hack away at each other's bodies. Many another thing seemeth also absurd; when a small green flame has passed through the Hall of Spirits, I have marvelled at the difference of its dimensions from the splendidly-arranged creature who represented it below. How very little soul serves to sustain a rather magnificent body, with even more magnificence of silk and satin and the like!

In the Hall of Spirits I stayed not long, though long enough to learn a few valuable lessons. I learnt that the importance of a man, when disembodied, is seldom in proportion to his importance when on earth.

When that dirty yellow soul of an emperor arrived—a flame like that of a farthing rushlight—there came also the perfectly blue clear fire of a great poet, burning with an intense purity that filled all the vicinage with light. Emperor and poet had their positions thoroughly reversed in the Hall of Spirits. Of course the poet was one who would not have condescended to speak to an emperor in his mundane existence; but in the eyes of idiots the imperial adventurer, with a nation under his thumb, was a more fortunate man than the quiet poet, who lived on lyrics of love. Look at the contrast now. See that pure blue flame burning like sapphire struck by sunlight. See the emperor's yellow rushlight dimly struggling with the darkness. Which of the twain enters eternity with happier omen?

Time seemed to vanish in this higher sphere. I cannot say how long it was that

I sojourned in the Hall of Spirits before passing to the planet Mars. I know that in course of time I so thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of spiritual life that I felt loth to submit to the tyranny of fleshly form again. I made the acquaintance of an Irish poetess, a flame half red half green, with whom I carried on what on earth would be called a flirtation. Indeed, we actually embraced each other, and I felt uncommonly like Ixion when he embraced a cloud. There was a certain ethereal pleasure in mingling two flames, but I think both the poetess and I regretted at that moment our transition into an immaterial sphere. Love-making grows rather dull when your charmer has not only no petticoats, but no waist to hang them on.

MARS. I got there all on a sudden, without any warning. The managers of *post-mortem* adventures are perhaps a little too

abrupt. I found myself in the fleshly apparel of a Mars-man, walking up to a village inn on that planet. The scene was curious. It was rather late at night, but the radiant hue of the red Mars atmosphere made things easily visible. When I had resided some time on Mars I met with a distinguished chemist, who informed me that their atmosphere is composed of three gases, oxygen, nitrogen, and pyrogen. The latter, a gas unknown on earth, gives the atmosphere a ruddy hue, and produces that heat which drives all the snow of the planet to its two poles.

I walked through the lighted doorway of a village inn. I found, on the following day, that it was called the "Ghost and Gridiron." I noticed, in course of time, that the inns in Mars had odd signs, and the people and places odd names. Quite right, as they did odd things. A portly inn-keeper welcomed

me on my arrival, asked whether I would like supper, sent me to see my room in the company of a buxom chambermaid. Everything was delightful. The room was airy, the bed clean, the chambermaid coy, the landlord jolly. I supped on rump-steak, with sauce made of a Mars shellfish; but the steak was cut from a creature far superior to our ordinary ox, and the shellfish was more delicious than the best Whitstable oysters. I drank therewith a malt liquor of the landlord's own brewing, much better than London stout of Meux or Whitbread.

Well I slept. I was conscious of something in the air which rendered it quite different from my native telluric atmosphere. I learnt, in time, that it was the wonderful gas pyrogen, heretofore mentioned, which does not exist in any other planet of the solar system. This gas has such healthful power that I found there was not a single

doctor on the surface of Mars. The profession is unknown. People die of nothing but old age. There are centenarians enough to make Mr. Thoms tear his hair.

It was eventide when I somehow or other found myself at the doorway of the "Ghost and Gridiron." I had not noticed its situation. When morning came, I found that it was in a picturesque village; a noble church, embowered in woodland, rose right opposite me, and I felt glad at heart that the people of Mars were a religious people. It was a glorious Summer morning. I dressed rapidly. I found that the fates which directed my path had not only invested me in a costume such as the people of Mars wear, but had also placed in my pocket a purse of the Mars coinage. It was of extreme beauty, delightfully designed and clearly cut. On one side was a crowned head in profile, with a legend

to me unintelligible; on the other was the archangel Michael slaying the devil. Satan, with a spear through his breast, and the archangelic foot on his throat, looked pretty well done for.

For breakfast, if I may mention such a trifle, I had coffee, and the thinnest curls of forest bacon, and ripe peaches, and a cream like that of Devon. When it was finished, and I had strolled into the village and wondered at its quaintnesses, I asked the landlord for my bill.

He looked amazed.

"Well, sir," he said, "I don't know where you may come from, but I thought everybody knew that His Majesty the King keeps up all the inns, and that nobody is allowed to pay for anything. I suppose you've been living in some far away country place, and haven't heard of our great Reform Bill. Why, sir, we've abolished money. It saves

such a lot of trouble. If you want anything you've only to ask for it, and nobody is allowed to refuse. I'm sure I hope you got a dinner and breakfast that you liked. I take as much pleasure in serving any customer now that they don't pay for it."

I wanted my jovial landlord to accept some coin, but he assured me that money was useless in Mars, and that anyone attempting to pay for anything would, if found out, be publicly flogged. As I had no desire to commence my career in the planet with such contumely, I did not insist on paying my bill.

I wandered out that morning into the pleasant village, desirous of ascertaining what manner of planet I had come to inhabit. Methought a visit to the church would be a good commencement. When I came to walk towards it, I found it was much farther off than it seemed; and I then got the first

inkling of the fact, which I subsequently established, that in the atmosphere of Mars you see much farther than in our planet. An eminent chemist of Mars has shown very clearly the reason of this, but the demonstration is too abstruse to be inserted here.

To my surprise, between me and the church there was a lake as wide as Windermere. When I reached the margin, I found a ferry boat, with a very pretty girl ready to ferry me across; and here, in anticipation of the chapter which I have to write on the ladies of Mars, I may perhaps be allowed to say that I never saw one ugly woman on that planet. Whether it is the pyrogen in the atmosphere, or the absence of money, I don't know; but they are all lovely, and they last lovely. The canon forbidding a man to marry his grandmother would have some significance in Mars.

The ferry-girl took me across. It was

quite half a mile, but she would not let me help her. When I asked her what there was to pay for the ferry, she requested me to give her a kiss—which I did without hesitation. I began to think Mars by no means an unpleasant place of residence for a gentleman of genial and expansive tastes.

When I came within the shadow of that church, it amazed me. I knew Sarum spire: this was far higher. More amazing was it that trees stood around, higher than the spire itself. I was gazing in perfect awe at the glorious church and the grander woodland, when I heard a sound near me, and beheld a gentleman of middle height and middle age, balancing himself with some difficulty on the churchyard wall. He was

"A noticeable man, with great grey eyes,"

and his forehead looked like an ivory dome for genius to inhabit.

"I am glad to meet a denizen of earth on

this planet," he said. "That is a fine spire. I forget their Mars measure, but it is about a thousand feet high, so far as I can make out. And the trees are higher! They go in for the material sublime in this vagrant red-tinged island of the sky."

"Have you been long here?" I asked.

"Long?" he said, with a gesture much like surprise in those seldom perturbable eyes. "Long? Well, it may be a century, and it may be an hour. I have given up time. I have taken to eternity for a change. It suits me."

"I find myself in Mars," I said, "with no particular idea as to what I ought to do, and with no notion in the world how long I am to remain here. What would you advise me to do?"

"I advise! I thank Apollo Ekaërgos I never advised man or woman in my life, and when boy or girl wants advice I whip

it. My dear earth-brother, you are in Mars —accept Mars—take everything easily. I have tried several of our planets, and this is the best I know. They are too philosophical in Jupiter, and too fast in Venus. Mars is one of the few planets where they really understand life. Shall we travel together? I want to make a descriptive account of the planet, which I dare say Longman or Murray would publish when I return to earth."

I agreed, only too happy to meet an earth-denizen who was evidently a man of genius. Somewhere or other I had seen his likeness, but where? I knew I ought to know him. I did not like to ask a man his name, when he might have left it behind him with his skin.

"There is a fine altar-piece in this church," he said. "Will you look at it? The Mars people are not quite equal to us—they paint

well enough, but they can't produce poetry. Still I like them. They have not yet invented the Radical."

"I never had much to do with politics," I remarked, "and scarcely know a Radical from any other sort of fool. Mine is rather a vague notion of such matters; but in the days when I was an Englishman, I was loyal to the King, in my own uninstructed way."

My acquaintance rocked himself backwards and forwards on the wall, looking ridiculously like an owl. Suddenly he said:

"Come, let us see this fresco."

I went with him. It was a grand painting —two men and a dog—nothing more. But one of those men was Odysseus, and the dog was Argos. I looked at my companion with surprise. I had expected something perfectly and patently orthodox. He explained to me that Homer was the bible of the planet Mars.

"How can that be?" I asked. "How in the world did Homer migrate here?"

"How did you and I get here, my friend? It has been coolly asserted that, at the time of the siege of Troy, Homer was a camel in Bactria. That I deny. The soul of man never passes into any lower creature; the soul of that supreme man we call the poet, never passes even into the lower ranks of men. A poet is as high above a man, as a man above a dog; and as to Homer, why, he came here as we came. He had in his memory his great epic the *Iliad*, his great romance the *Odyssey*. He translated them instinctively into the language of Mars. Mars accepted his legends, his theology, his ethics, and I think Mars was right. If you must have a multitude of gods, the Homeric gods are the best. I believe in one only —*whom I know*."

These last words he uttered with a deep

gravity, as if to cling to the idea of God was the central thought in his mind; and thus indeed I found it when we became friends. It was one delight—the conscious feeling of a present God. It saved him from all cynicism, from all dissatisfaction. The song of a bird, the beauty of a sunset, the laugh of a girl, were all divine gifts to him—he intensified the enjoyment of life by always remembering the Giver of that enjoyment. Pen, ink, and paper fail to make what I mean intelligible. You could not be in that man's company without feeling that he was never alone.

The Homeric fresco was fine. There walked Odysseus, disguised by the power of the goddess who guided him, but grand in his disguise. Royal was his bare throat, a pillar of power; wide his stately chest; and as he stood, his strong hands reached to his knees. The honest swineherd looked a

dwarf beside him. Huge Argo, aged and deaf, blinking wearily by the palace gate, was suddenly alive again at his master's tread—alive a moment, and then dead for ever. The painter had caught the poet's vision perfectly.

"We must come to this church some day," said my companion. "There is rather a fine preacher. I also have preached, but usually with the effect of driving my congregation gradually away."

"You are a poet," I said. "Poets should not preach."

"We'll go farther than that. Poets should write no poetry. They may think it, they may whisper it to the lady they love, they may even recite it to a great audience, when poetry can breed a passion of war, but write it—never! No, poetry is spoilt by being formulated. It is a world—the common poetaster would make it a map!"

We passed out of the church, and walked up a lovely slope of emerald green, which gave a charming view of the lake below. We sat on an ancient boulder of granite, and looked down upon the lake, alive with sails, and the trees mysteriously hiding quaint corners of wilful water. We heard light laughter. Mars was merry.

"There is no sea on this planet," said my companion. "I think that an admirable arrangement. There are plenty of pleasant lakes, fed by rivulets and from the hills; but sea there is none. And you have yet to discover the fortunate power of the water of Mars."

"What is that?" I said.

"Come, we will climb to the summit of this hill—there is a spring there—you shall try it."

It was rather hard work, the hill being about the height of Coniston Old Man, and

very like it. Quite at the top there was a quaint well, with an arch of stone over it, and maidenhair fern fluttering around.

"Make a cup of thy palm and drink," said my companion.

I obeyed. I was strangely refreshed. The water had the perfect pure taste of water—the most delicious of all liquid tastes—but it had also the power of a noble wine.

"Ah!" quoth my companion, "now you know. 'Tis the famous gas of Mars, the element unknown to our poor planet. Pyrogen blends with oxygen and hydrogen, producing a water that is superior to any wine I have ever tasted—and I have tried several varieties on several planets."

I took another draught—and liked it. There is no fluid so enjoyable as water. Water with pyrogen in it *is*—well, it is a

drink to ruin la Veuve Clicquot, and the Marquis de Lur Saluces.

"I am of opinion," proceeded my companion, always looking very wise, but with a touch of humour about his mouth that was delightful, "that water of this kind would be uncommonly useful on our poor old pauper planet Earth, where people drink very bad beer. Although not particularly fond of my fellow-creatures, I should like to give them something not wholly poisoned to drink; but I see no way—I really see no way, so I suppose you and I had better drink when thirsty at these wayside-wells, and be thankful that there is such a gas as pyrogen."

I admitted my thankfulness. Indeed, the waters of Mars are treasures unutterable. Not all, as I think, are equally strong; but all have a delicious healthful stimulus, without departure from the taste of water in absolute purity. The result is not to be

described. No man in the world with a palate would prefer the finest wine in the whole catalogue of vintages to water, if water could only give him that intellectual stimulus he needs. This is given by the water of Mars.

"I think I shall call you Mark Antony," said my companion, abruptly. "You remind me of him in many respects. Yes, it is a good name—it is separable; you can be Mark sometimes—Antony on great occasions."

"And what shall I call you?" I asked.

"*Ἔστησε.* 'Tis Punic Greek for 'he hath stood.' Stood I have, in days now past, against the armies of fools, idiots, braggarts, blockheads. It was no easy matter, Mark. The very men who learnt from me professed to laugh at me. They deemed themselves wiser than I, because, catching up a stray idea of mine, they could make it more

intelligible to the public than I could. *They*, with their one small stolen idea! Of course, they could explain it. *My* difficulty was that I had too many ideas. So only the men who think know what I did for the world; and I often wonder whether I shall have better fortune in my next avatar. It will come soon, I suppose."

I began to understand to whom I was listening. Listening was a necessity, but a very delightful necessity, when *Ἕσπερε* talked. We were ascending the hill as we thus conversed, and on its very summit was a curious old ruin. I had not (indeed I have not now) any scientific knowledge of the archæology of Mars; but it was the sort of antique edifice that, in the England of to-day, would be ascribed to the Romans. There was an ancient column, with circles carved on the capital, and all covered with an orange lichen.

Ἔσπερε leaned awhile against this quaint old relic of the past. Then he suddenly said,

"Nos tristia vitae
Solamur cantu."

"There need be nothing very sad in this pleasant planet," I replied.

What said he?

"Ah! is not memory sad, my friend,
And thought of that sweet youthful time,
When life was love, when love was life,
When not to love was crime?

"I sang my sweet a song so sad,
She came into my arms to say,
'O darling, such another tale
Please tell another day.'

"Her beautiful bright eyes had tears
Within them—diamonds, sapphire-drowned—
Her white arms trembled as they stretched
My willing waist around.

"I said, 'My own sweet Genevieve,
I'll tell you tales by day and night,
And some shall be of love's despair,
And some of love's delight.

"'I'll sing you songs to make you laugh,
And sadder songs to make you weep,
Songs sweet as after sunshine rain,
As kisses after sleep.

" ' Songs also like the clarion-blast
Of England, ready for the fight;
But which would you like best by day,
And which like best by night?'

" She laughed a merry little laugh,
My Genevieve—a joyous sprite;
She said, ' O sing of love at noon,
And sing of love at night.' "

CHAPTER II.

Ἔστησε.

"He holds him with his glittering eye."

"MARK ANTONY," said Ἔστησε, "let us sleep to night at the Ghost and Gridiron. Several times have I visited that inn, and I have come to the belief that its gridiron is more real than its ghost. No ghost have I seen; but rump-steak have I eaten that could by no means have been cooked except on a gridiron. When I was on earth I have more than once dined with the Sublime Society of steak-eaters, and had my slice of ox cooked by a Royal Duke, and

served by a Knight of the Garter. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* Let the man blush who thinks rump-steak and oysters beneath the dignity of princes and poets."

We were skirting the lovely margin of the lake on our way to the Ghost and Gridiron. The loftiest oaks and cedars that I had ever seen overshadowed this beautiful piece of water; but for all that, and though sunset was almost past, so translucent was the lake that you could see the fish in its depths. Ἔστησε would put his long white hand in the water; lo, a fish would come at once to greet it, acknowledging some strange magnetic mastery in the man. The birds sang more sweetly as he passed beneath the trees. The very weather smiled on him. His faith in the kindness of God had perpetual reward.

"Why do you link together prince and poet?" I asked, as we stood awhile watch-

ing a white bat that rushed from the hills above into the quiet lake. "What connexion can there be between them?"

"How often, I wonder, during the next few centuries, shall I be asked this question? The prince, of course, represented the prose of the world. His early ancestors, who founded his family, was a poet, depend on it. Look what poetic power there was in Alfred . . . in Edward the First, when he commissioned Peter l'Imagineur to build those crosses to Eleanor . . . ay, and even in Charles the Second, when he swam with that peasant on his back, and made love to the blacksmith's wife, as he was out wood-cutting with Penderel. In a line of princes there will be fools; but their inception is poetic, and poetic also is their correlation to the people they rule. The king *is* the nation. When a nation comes to its worst and kills its king, as in the cases of England

and France, you have in truth a national suicide. It is not the prince merely who is to blame, it is the whole people. To kill a king is national suicide; to compel him to abdicate is national lunacy. The worst hereditary monarch that ever reigned is better than the best elected ruler or usurper. Experience shows these things; but it takes long time to teach the ordinary unornamental but careful biped."

"Almost as long as it takes to teach him to love poetry," I said.

"Almost. There are few things that so perplex the commonalty as the connexion between poetry and politics. Yet has poetry no reason to exist, except when connected with politics; for one is the vision of life as it is, and the other is the vision of life as we desire it to be. Therefore is it that no man is worthy to be considered as a politician who is incapable of

understanding the poetry of his race and country."

We reached the Ghost and Gridiron, and the disinterested landlord was evidently very glad to see us again. *"Εστησε* had been here more than once previously. He had indeed, *ore rotundo*, remonstrated with the landlord in regard to the sign of his inn, maintaining that, with such a name, a ghost is as requisite as a gridiron. Alas, there was no ghost.

It was a wonderful night, I remember. The world was calm; the beauty of the sky was unutterable, for the rich glow of pyrogen in the atmosphere made it seem as if the stars were visible through a soft haze of ruby. *"Εστησε* and I fared sumptuously, and enjoyed ourselves. We strolled after supper into the garden of the Ghost and Gridiron. Nothing had we drunken save water, but water of Mars made us joyous and full

of life. How the stars rained influence upon us!

"I want an adventure," I said, as we walked across the soft lawn.

There was a nightingale singing wildly. I pined to fight or to love—preferably both. Another nightingale broke into song; then suddenly more and more.

> "Ah! never elsewhere in one place I knew
> So many nightingales,"

said my companion. "And do you know the omen? Wherever there is a nightingale there is a possible adventure."

"You mean that?" I said—"or is it an invention of the moment?"

"It is true. Where the nightingale sings, there love loiters. Love is loitering here, depend on it, awaiting his opportunity. You want an adventure: I do not. Alas! I have had only too many!"

As my comrade spoke, I could see a

radiant light in his marvellous eyes. He seemed to remember past events in our old planet somewhat wistfully.

"*"Αυριον "αδιον "ασω,*" he said.

"Who once has heard the nightingale
Sing love-songs in the night,
Shall evermore on sea or shore
Sigh for sweet love's delight.

"That song is clear, and every year
Frets the fair summer tide;
It rings full plain where lime-sheaths rain
And lilac-blooms abide.

"And he who hath heard that brown-eyed bird,
When stars climb heaven's blue steep,
Ere the next star dips, let him kiss fair lips,
Else shall he never sleep."

Thus did *"Εστησε* improvise. I laughed at his humours.

"Nightingales may sing," I said, "and glad am I to hear them; but their song will scarcely conjure up kissable lips in the vicinage of the Ghost and Gridiron. No; there is no adventure to-night, I fear."

"Unbeliever!" he said. "Adventure is

[illegible] Liszt."

There was a [illegible] of [illegible]—a woman's voice. By the [illegible] we discerned a female form. We heard harsh sounds in [illegible]: an ungraceful monster of a man followed the flying demoiselle, using strong language, wherein Irish and Latin seemed to mingle. I caught and collared him as he passed. He collapsed, and I restored him to consciousness with a mild kick. Meanwhile, '[illegible] had consoled the lady, who turned out to be exquisitely pretty and transcendently clever.

"They christened me by a name which means joy," she said, when her enemy had departed, and she was safe under our care.

"Alas! there must have been something unfortunate in that baptism, for sorrow has been my most unchanging fate. Imagine my being accosted and persecuted in this planet by that dreadful man who worried me on earth!"

Her voice had a sob in it.

"Don't trouble yourself, Lady of Joy," said *Ἔστησε*. "Develop your own natural character. That dreadful man will not come near you again, for fear of my friend Mark Antony's valiant boots. That dreadful man deserves some excuse, my child; for who could hear you sing and not love you? But forget him; you are safe. I will be your chaperon. My young friend, Mark Antony, will make himself agreeable to you. Mark, did I not tell thee there was magic in the nightingale's note?"

"What magic?" asked the lady.

"O, Mars is all magic," answered *Ἔστησε*.

"The brown bird sings, the rain air rings,
And Echo answers sweet,
And young feet rush, and young cheeks flush,
And young lips murmur and meet."

With such encouragement, could I do less than kiss the lips of the improvisatrice, lady of joy? I don't know whether I could, but I did not.

"Now," said Ἔστηκε, "let us come to an agreement. Here we are, three ancient dwellers upon earth, who have come into residence on the planet Mars. Of myself there is no necessity for anything to be said. My step-dame planet will find me out in time. Of the lady whom they christened Joy, there is this delightful thought, that if her life had many sorrows, it gave to others many joys. As to you, Mark Antony, answer for yourself. *I* know your history well, for I read your character, and character is the root of history. You have been a fortunate fool. If you pass through the ordeal of

this planet wisely, you will lose your folly, and retain your fortune. Now is your chance—perhaps it is my chance, too—perhaps it is Joy's. Let us travel together. Let us look for other earth-dwellers, of whom many are wandering about Mars. Let us explore the planet, picking up any comrades we may find."

I agreed. Joy agreed. We went back to the inn, to make our arrangements for the night. They were difficult at first sight, and would on earth have been full of very delicate considerations; but when you have been stripped of your suit of flesh, and passed on to another sphere, you reject trivial matters. The portly and hospitable landlord informed us that he had but one vacant bedchamber, that it contained four beds, that we were welcome to three of them, but that the fourth was always kept vacant for a guest of curious habits, who

of humanity, is the best medicine in the world for naughty girls. A grain of it would have cured Juliet—indeed, a grain of it would have robbed Eve of that curiosity which some people deplore. I don't. Women ought to be inquisitive. If I had my way, all the Post Offices should be kept by post-mistresses; they would do such an immense deal of good, by stealthily reading all the letters, and communicating their contents to other people. But I am thinking of Earth; the folk of Mars don't seem to have a grain of curiosity in their composition. It is the one great fault of this pleasant planet."

"You seriously think it a fault?" I said.

"I fancy so; if you look at the matter philosophically, curiosity is at the basis of all the sciences. The astronomer's desire to know how far the sun is from the earth is closely akin to the gossip's desire to know who was the father of her neighbour's illegitimate

child. Here in Mars they ask no questions. The note of interrogation is unknown in their punctuative system, if they have any such system. It saves a deal of lying, of course, for, when people persist in asking questions, you naturally invent answers. But I think it decreases scientific research. If you observe, these Mars people have not yet invented newspapers or factories or mines or lawyers or hotel bills. Isn't it sad? The depth of their ignorance is really tragic. It is shown by our immediate difficulty. Imagine their expecting a lady to sleep in a quadruple-bedded room!"

"Do you talk in your sleep, Mr. *Ἔσπασε*?" asked Joy, humorously.

"I *always* talk," he replied. "You will hear my voice all through the midnight murmuring musically. You will hear

> "A noise like of a hidden brook,
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune."

"What a charming prospect!" said Joy, laughingly, to me. "What will be the report to-morrow morning? Shall we have 'drunken deep of all the blessedness of sleep?' I sadly fear not."

Joy accepting the situation, we took appropriate refreshment, and went upstairs. The landlord guided us. The room was a very large one, almost square, with a bed in each corner, curtained in with adequate decorum. One of these beds, with a green coverlet, was reserved for the mysterious gentleman who had the habit of turning up at midnight.

Ἔστησε took three or four turns up and down the room, walked to one of the windows, and expressed in strong language his disgust that Mars had no moon, then found his way into bed with exemplary rapidity.

Joy, who was at the opposite corner to mine, diagonally, knelt down in the smallest possible amount of linen, and said her

prayers. Then she disappeared amid the lavender-scented sheets.

I could not sleep. I tried all possible experiments. I endeavoured, with closed eyes, to imagine my own breath. I counted myriads of sheep passing slowly up a sheep-walk. I followed the movements of that snail that climbed five feet up a wall every day, and slid back four feet every night. I set myself to extract square roots. I discovered the exact instant at which the hands of one's watch (if one had not forgotten to wind it up) would coincide between one and two. I calculated the duration of the box-woods of the British Isles, on the assumption that every curate plays croquet for a year before he finds a wife, and was amused to discover that the time was exactly the same as that Mr. Gladstone fixed for disestablishing the Church. I made poetry. Even that did not cause me to sleep.

Confound it! And there was *Ἔστησε* snoring tremendously in his corner, while Joy's pretty nostrils emitted what might be described as an unconscious lyrical effusion. Why can't I sleep also?

Has it ever happened to you, gentle reader, to be sleepy when you desired to be sleepless, or sleepless when you desired to be sleepy? Both are irritating. I often write in my sleep, and, when I see the nonsense I have written, wonder if it may contain some hidden meaning, like the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. Often again I cannot sleep; the brain lamp burns too clearly, and will not let itself be puffed out by any effort of will. This night I was only too lucidly awake, while my friends were enjoying slumbers which I heartily envied.

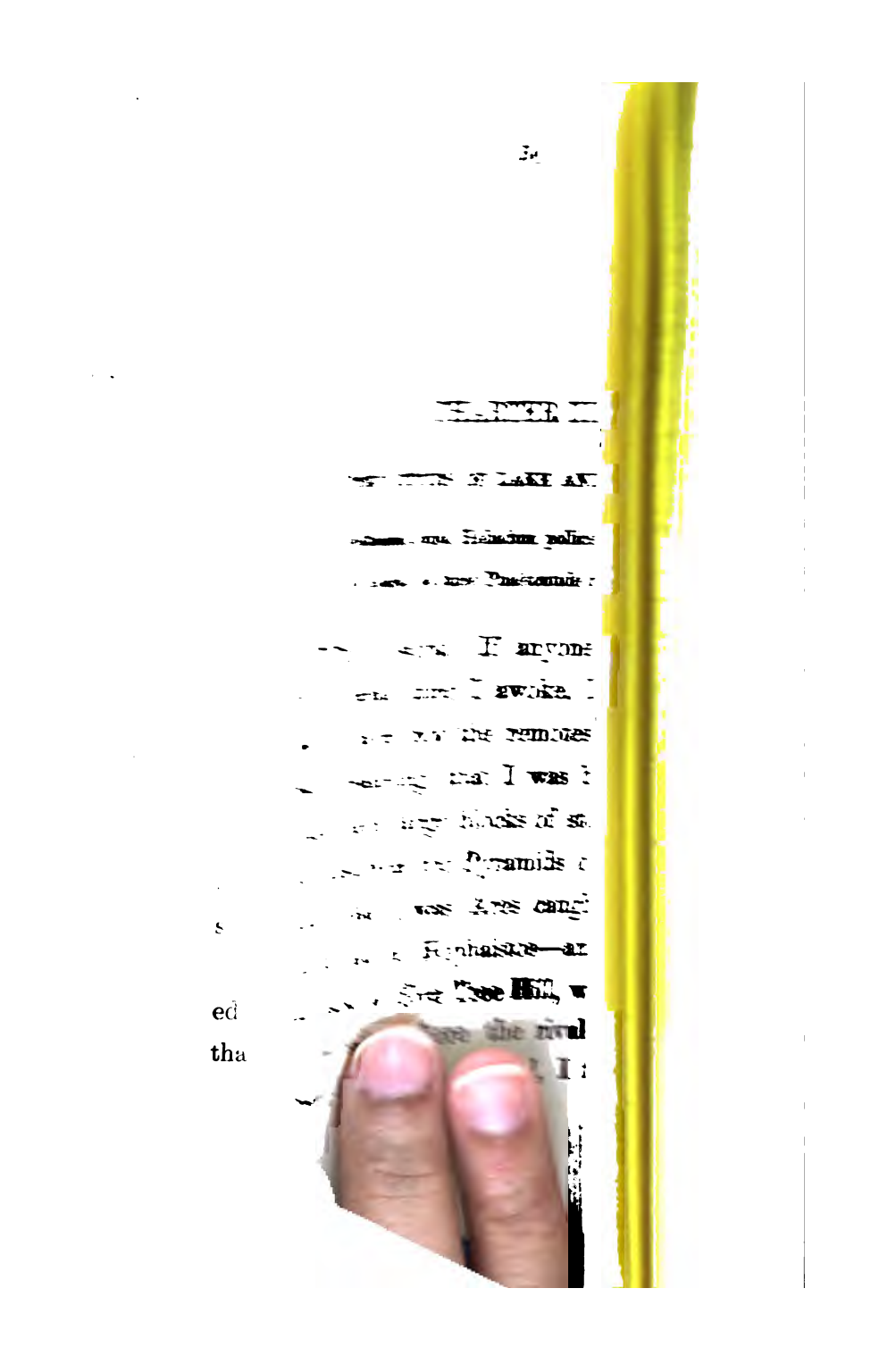
Suddenly the door of our chamber opened. The landlord appeared in the dishabille that one expects of a landlord at midnight.

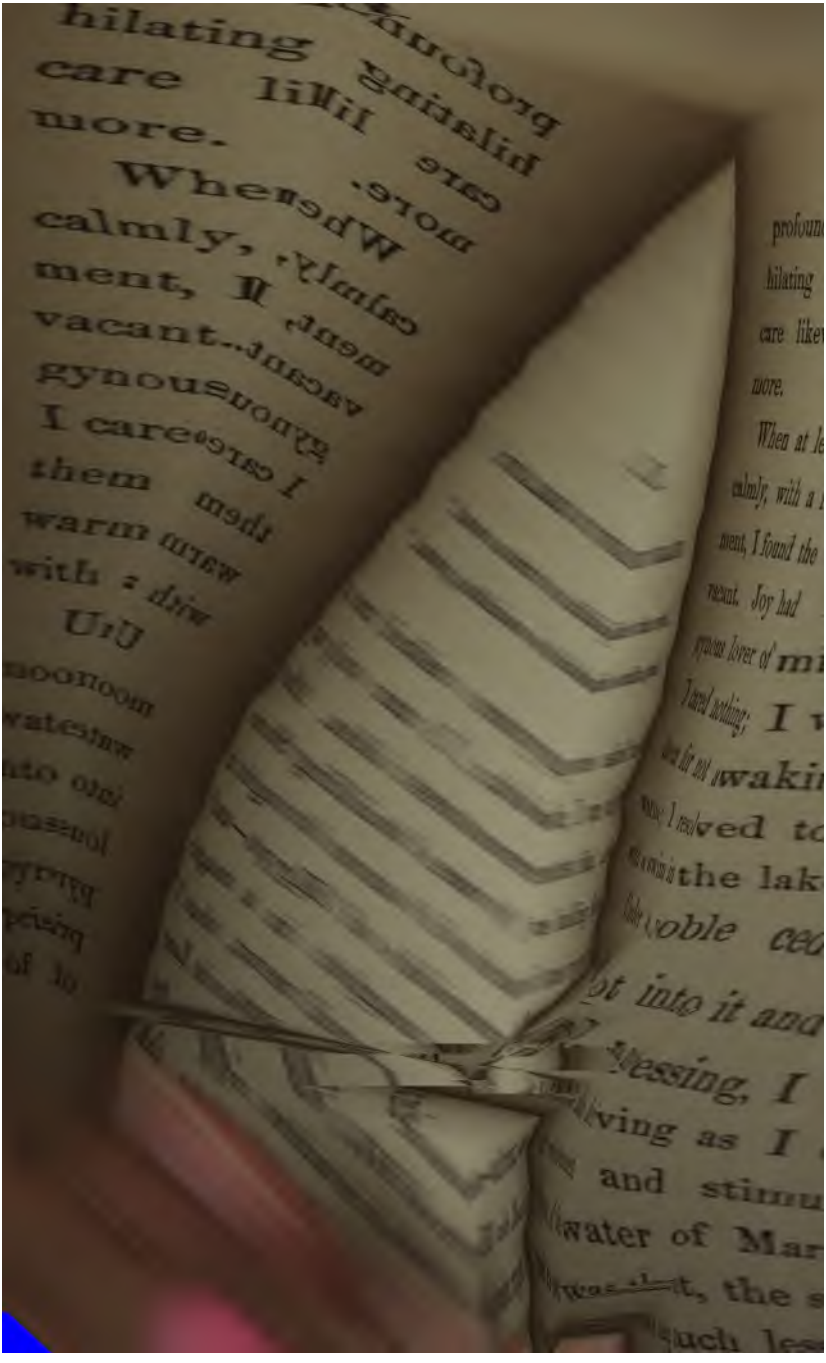
With him came the vagrom guest . . . a boy almost, a boy that might pass for a girl . . . with long light hair and a tremulous, excited face, and wild eyes. "Androgynos," I thought.

There was soon silence. Incurious, the new-comer threw himself on his bed without undressing. But I heard him say:—

> "O silent stars, that gaze on Mars!
> O liquid walls of living light!
> When ends my day of storm and strife?
> When comes my night of love and life?
> When comes good night?"

This settled me. I fell asleep, and dreamt I was the man who built Stonehenge.





CHARTER III.

THE CITIES OF LAKE AND ISLAND.

"Gemma quod Heliadum pollice trita notet."

"Et latet, et lucet Phaëtontide condita gutta."

YES, I slept. If anyone asked me at what time I awoke, I can only say that I have not the remotest idea. After first dreaming that I was building Stonehenge with large blocks of stone brought in balloons from the Pyramids of Egypt—and next, that I was Ares caught in a magic golden net of Hephaistos—and next, that I was back at Five Tree Hill, with Mavis Lee by my side, where the rivulet ripples by Saint Apollonia's Chapel, I fell into that

profound and dreamless sleep which, annihilating thought, annihilates trouble and care likewise. That night I dreamt no more.

When at length I did awake, slowly and calmly, with a feeling of perfect refreshment, I found the sun high, and the room vacant. Joy had fled; so had the androgynous lover of midnight; so had Ἔστησε. I cared nothing; I was heartily thankful to them for not awaking me. The air was warm; I resolved to commence the day with a swim in the lake near by.

Under a noble cedar a pair-oar was moored. I got into it and rowed into deep water. Then, undressing, I took a header into the lake, deriving as I dived marvellous refreshment and stimulus from the pyrogen of the water of Mars. What surprised me most was that, the specific gravity of the water being much less than that of

our terrene fluid, I went far deeper down with my first impulse. Strange to say, I could remain below without inconvenience. An eminent chemist has suggested to me that the pyrogen in Mars water is not chemically, but mechanically mixed with it, and is sufficiently liberated to make breathing enjoyable. I don't know about this; I do know that I breathed as easily under water as above it.

Having, like Lyndhurst, given up being amazed at anything, I took with coolness my arrival at what was clearly the entrance to a subaqueous city. Two lofty columns of porphyry bore a cross-piece of polished granite, and, between them, great gates of malachite stood open wide. I hesitated whether to enter or not. The gate had no guardian. The wide sea-street seemed to pass between a mile of palaces. Much I wondered whether indeed this was some

drowned city of long-past times, or whether it really had inhabitants.

I was not long left doubtful. There emerged from one of the great buildings near me a little man, with no attire except a pair of spectacles. He greeted me with whimsical deference, and bade me welcome to the city of gems. He had in his hand a huge ruby, cut *en cabochon*, which he seemed to have just been manipulating with a delicate tool of steel.

"Here," he said, "we amuse ourselves with the study of colour. We build palaces of diamonds. We shave sapphire thin as a butterfly's wing. We catch insects and fishes in amber. We ignite pyrogen with the hidden heat of the carbuncle. Look!"

He made a movement, and a stream of ruddy light ran right up to the surface of the water. Then he beckoned me to follow

him. We entered a wide saloon, all of porphyry, where, on a table of white marble, lay the most magnificent gems I ever beheld till then.

"You are from another planet," he said, "where they cannot live under water or cut gems like these. We get many such visitors. Here is a memento for you."

He took from the table an armlet of platinum; the soldiers of Rome wore such armlets in gold and silver, for use as well as adornment. On this band of platinum was a circular drop of amber, about two inches in diameter: within it, with wings widespread, was a large butterfly, red as to the head, green in body, with wings of blue sapphire sprinkled with dots of dazzling gold. Around the great amber drop was a circle of dark emeralds, the colour of deep sea water, set in thin rings of virgin-gold.

"Take this," he said, "O son of a strange

planet! Wear it while you are here."

He clasped it on my right wrist.

"One word more. Visit the island in the middle of the lake. There you will see my daughter. This armlet will cause you to be recognized. Farewell."

It was so clear a case of abrupt dismissal that I walked back through the malachite gateway, and at once sought the upper air. As I rose toward the surface, I caught a glimpse of the little man, with spectacles on nose, intensely watching me. I had never seen so comical a figure.

I swam to my boat. Having given up being surprised at anything, I was not surprised to find Ἔστησε in my boat.

"Ah," he said, "I thought you were not drowned. I got the ferry lass to take me to your boat, which, by the way, I suppose is borrowed or stolen. It's a good custom they have here, to put pretty girls in charge

of ferries. That's a fine armlet: Phaëton's sisters must have been very lachrymose the day they drowned that splendid papilio in their electric tears. It has perhaps not occurred to you that the Phaëton legend and the liquid electrum were merely the Greek poetic way of dealing with science. Homer knew quite as much of electricity as my dear old friend Sir Humphrey Davy. By the way, I think he is here, fishing."

"Where are our friends of last night?" I asked.

"O, I don't know. Joy got up in a sorrowful state, and gushed away in tears. Extremes meet. The Man of Midnight was off at sunrise. I left you happily asleep, got a glass of milk, and wandered a few miles away. Returning, I beheld your vagrant bark. I was reminded of an adventure of mine on another planet. I never could ride, and so of course I delighted in

riding. I never could swim; equally of course I loved swimming. On a short tour I had hired a horse of the most contrary and contumacious character, and found myself one day on the margin of a pleasant lake. It was hot. I resolved on a dip. I tied my rampant Rosinante to a tree, undressed, and did my best to daringly dream myself. I might have done so, but that I heard a clatter of hoofs. Rosinante had escaped! I cursed in hot pursuit, deeming myself safe in that lovely place. When thoroughly out of breath, I managed to capture the animal, a mile off from my clothes. I mounted it, and rode back. Imagine—no, you cannot imagine—my horror at seeing a party of ladies carefully examining my apparel, evidently of opinion that it belonged to a drowned man. There they were—a female jury, waiting for the coroner."

"What did you do?" I asked, laughing.

All this time I was pulling toward the island, and he was professedly steering, which he did by pulling the rope fiercely with the hand that at the moment happened to be most excited. We zig-zagged greatly.

"What did I do? Well, there were about a dozen of them, and they were so curiously examining my raiment, and reading my letters and other nonsense, that they heard not on the heather the hoofs of my vagabond steed. So I forced the villain into the lake, and they heard the splash, and beheld a nude rider on a nude horse, and fled with headlong precipitation. I got ashore again, not at all sorry; but I believe they had run away with some of my love-letters."

We ran at this moment into a lovely little bay, so full of white water-lily, that it was hard to pull the boat through. We got ashore. *Ἔστησε* said:

"Of course you have not breakfasted."

"No."

"I have had nothing but a glass of milk. I know nothing of this island, but as a rule all Mars is right hospitable. Let us start in search of food."

There was a city in the distance shining in the radiant air, built apparently somewhat like the city beneath the mere. Before we reached it, however, we came to a pretty cottage, such as you might see in England itself: lawn in front, roses and honeysuckles and wistaria covering the walls, and peeping in at the windows in friendly fashion. There was a wicket gate, that seemed to invite the hand. There was not only fragrance of lavender, there were bee-hives. The smallest of white dogs basked in the sunshine.

"That distant city looks superb," said *Ἔστησε*, pausing at the wicket gate; "but it is distant, and the cottage is near. Besides, no wise man ever yet entered a city who

could find shelter in a cottage. I doubt whether any cottage was ever more hospitable than this. Let us lift the friendly latch."

He did, and the little white dog rushed wildly down the path, with more barks than any other dog could have ejaculated in the time, and flew frantically at "*Εσπασε*'s legs, and tore with its sharp little teeth a fragment from his pantaloons. Rushed after the little dog a little girl of thirteen or fourteen, who picked it up, and made a curtsey, and led the way to the door.

Behold a vision! A tall lithe yet lazy-looking girl with very thick bright brown curly hair, kept short, and a straight Greek nose, and a merry mouth, and eyes whose colour no one could possibly state, they changed so often. They were never one colour right through. I have seen them a soft brown, with scintillating flashes of sapphire; I have seen them a blue-black, with dots of

gold in them, like the gold leaf in *aqua d'or*. She was standing now just within the rustic porch, where the fragrance of honeysuckle was almost painfully delicious. She looked at us both keenly but briefly, and when she noticed my wonderful armlet of amber, she said:

"Ah, you have seen my father. He is well, of course: he never was otherwise."

"Young lady," said *Lemoc* without giving me a chance of reply, "we are hungry and athirst. We want that vulgar meal known as breakfast. That being consumed, we shall be in a condition to admire your beauty and listen to your pleasant prattle."

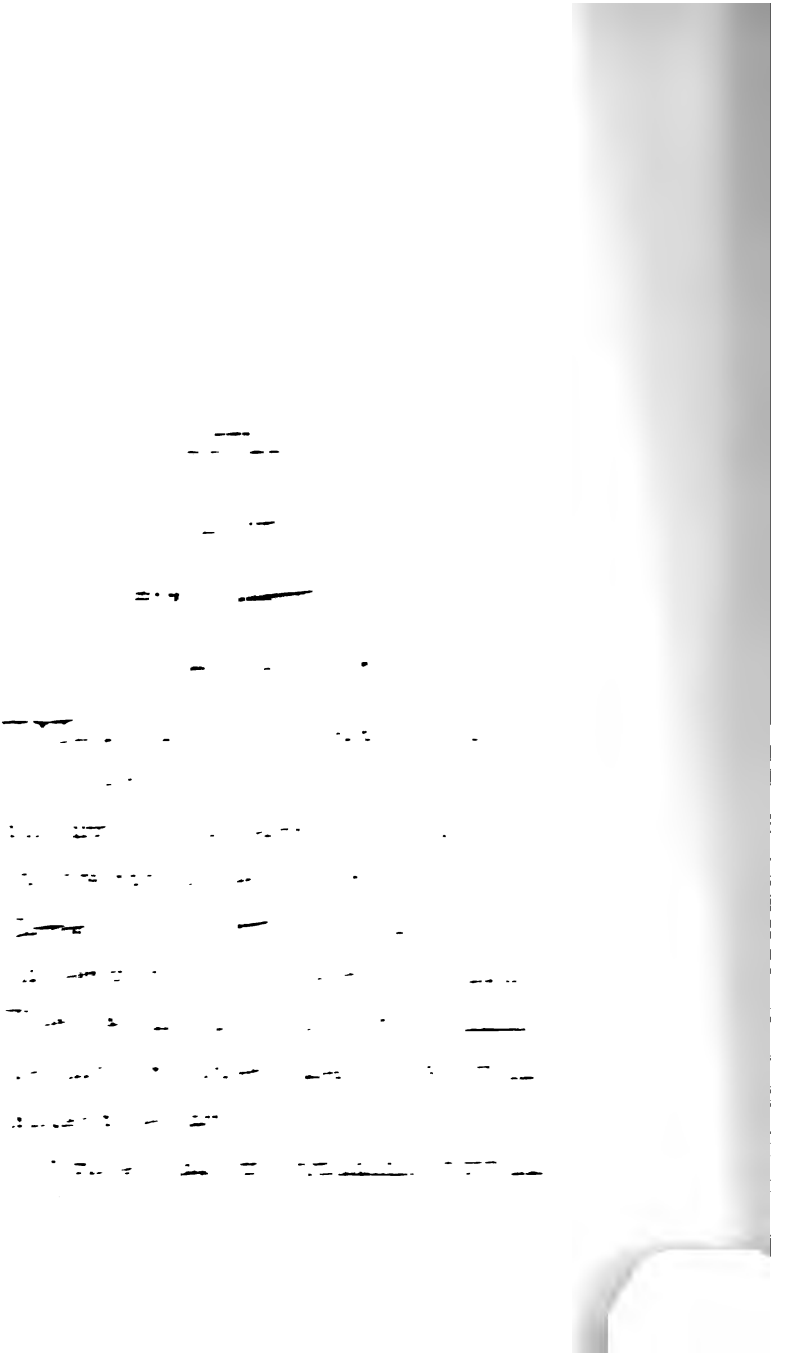
The girl broke into a gay laugh, like the silver splash of a water force in the land of the western moors.

"Breakfast you shall have," she said. "Phœbe, small but useful handmaiden, make coffee. Phœbe can, I assure you,

make coffee, though she has been ignominiously punished for lamentable ignorance of her multiplication-table."

It was a light bow-windowed room. On the table were soon spread delicate cold meats, cream cheese, salad of many sorts. There were wines, also, beside the coffee; and there was that best of all fluids, the water of Mars. We breakfasted with energy and enthusiasm.

"Alouette!" said *Ἐστησε*.



be shameful amid this perfect flower fragrance."

"Try!" she rejoined, and deftly made him a cigarette of something which certainly was not tobacco. Another also she gave to me. As I smoked it I felt a strange quietude come over me. It was not narcotic, it was supremely tranquil.

"We find something new every day on the surface of this planet," said *Ἔστησε*. "This, lady fair, is fresh to me. What is it?"

"The Lost Rose of Troy," she said. "When that city fell, every planet on the borders of Simoïs and Scamander perished. But Odysseus had taken some seeds, which he gave to Nausikaa; and Nausikaa brought them here, where the flowers flourish abundantly. *Perdita Troiae Rosa* the learned people call it. Every part of it is useful. The smell of the flower cures all maladies, restores the memory, quickens the imagina-

[illegible]

"[illegible] answered.

"We will settle down, Mark Antony," he said. "We will become nursery gardeners and grow the [illegible]. Is there a Covent Garden, my child, in that distant city?"

But the girl had run away while he was talking, and we were alone. My companion smoked placidly. [illegible] tobacco.

"I wonder what is the name of that noble city," he said presently. "I have dreamt of it. I wrote of it when I was a boy on earth. Let me remember.

'Across the wide plain, many miles away,
There is a calm and stately City. Lo!
Its towers and arches underneath the ray
Of the great Sun are smitten into snow.
One tower of marble, with a roseate glow,
Square, and yet light of build, dwarfs all the rest.
It seems to rise a thousand feet or so;
Its lordly loveliness is manifest.
Ay, we will visit thee, fair City in the West.'"

"Our hostess will tell us," I said.

"Call her Alouette. All women are birds. I made that discovery in another planet. She is a lark. She does not look before and after, or pine for what is not. She sends her spontaneous cry of delight to the summit of the sky. Yes, women are birds. I have known one or two owls . . . and O dear me, how many parrots! They are scientific, critical, heterodox . . . the female atheist that talks you dead."

"What is the little waiting-maid?" I asked.

"A wren," he replied. "Certes, sir, as

they say in the *Mort Arthur*, I wish either lark or wren would come this way. Ilion *Perdita* has a noble flavour. I wonder are there any ripe berries to be found?"

Phœbe the wren suddenly came near, singing forgetfully. She stopped with a blush. Snow, the little dog, was darting gaily at her heels. She was one of those children that seem innocently sorrowful; they are fresh and facile and flower-like.

"Where is your mistress?" said Teresa.

The question was instantly answered. We saw Alouette coming down the garden path in a gay fashion, with more cigarettes on a silver tray, and glasses of the Ilion *Perdita* wine. She moved so easily that I thought there was something in my friend's bird-theory. It seemed as if she might have flown into the air; and really, as we met her father at the bottom of a lake, we could not have been surprised at anything of the

kind. She might have flown away into the illimitable ether, without thoroughly astonishing us.

"More cigarettes, more wine," she said, placing her tray on the rustic table near us.

"I am so glad you like the Lost Rose; tell me what you think of the wine. Is it not better than Christabel's?"

"It is, I must say, marvellously good," said *Ἔστησε*, looking curiously at the liquid as it glanced in his glass. It was of a dark amber colour, but almost effervescent; the glasses containing it were amazingly thin . . . thin as the wing of a wasp . . . white, but with a streak of crimson running irregularly and capriciously through them. "I like this liquid," he continued. "*Rosa Perdita* beats heather as a basis for wine."

"I made it, you know," said Alouette, "and I am the best maker in Mars."

"Ha!" quoth [illegible]

"[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]"

"What is that [illegible]?" I said to Alouette.

"Troy."

[illegible] eyes were filled with a [illegible] light.

"I remember the [illegible]," he cried. "Yes, that is Troy, and I shall see Helen and Andromache. [illegible] what it is, Marie Antony! [illegible] the glorious things rejected on earth are preserved immortally. We [illegible] Troy. Will you come, Alouette?"

"Will I leave you?" she said. "[illegible] likely again to meet with such [illegible] strangers? Depend on me as your companion till you are tired of me."

"We accept," said Ἔσπησε. "I answer for Mark Antony as for myself. We are both your friends and servants."

Such is Mars. A planet of discontinuity and caprice. Here on earth the French tell us that nothing is certain but the unforeseen. The apophthegm applies to Mars more accurately. Where (even in France) will you find a young lady like Alouette?

Off we all walked toward Troy, little Snow being of the campany, and barking with a wild garrulity of joy. Phœbe the wren bowed over the wicket-gate, and cried a little because she wasn't allowed to go. Then she went indoors and played with a kitten and a doll, and ate several jam-tarts.

The great gates of the city stood before us. A myriad horsemen could easily have come upon an enemy through those mighty and majestic portals. "Yes," I thought,

"this is the Troy of my boyhood when all the futile fuss about syntax and Sisera did not prevent me from perceiving the presence of a supreme poet. Yes, this is wide-streeted windy Troy. Now I shall see Helen and Andromache. Now I shall see Cassandra, whom Apollo deigned to love. Priam will grant me an audience; Hector will give me a smile; Paris will invite me to dinner."

I said some of these things to Ernest. He smiled.

"You may meet Homer here," he said; "if so, 'twill be better fortune than encountering all the swells at Queen Hecuba's drawing-room."

In the very centre of Troy, just below the enormous tower of the temple dedicated to Apollo, there is a very pleasant club, wherein ladies and gentlemen meet. London had such clubs once, but these dull decorous days have made Saint James's Street too

saintly. The Troy Tory Club (anagrammatic, you observe) admitted no member who had not a special vice. Anything like virtue produced inevitable black balls. To this club Alouette, being a member, took us; we entered its superb saloon, and were much amused at the scene around us. It was extremely pleasant.

London, which is the centre of our modern world, has established the doctrine of the separation of sexes. It is quite new, and quite false. Let no married man go anywhere (faith! not to the Derby, or to Heaven itself) without his wife. Our clubs are an abomination. Even their cookery is beneath contempt to the man who knows what a good home dinner is. But why do men go in for this absurd isolation? I am no advocate of woman's rights; and I think if they have any wrongs, it is all their own fault; but the general tendency of society is

to a ridiculous antagonism between the sexes. I'm on the women's side, and always shall be.

We entered, at I have said, the supper-saloon of the Troy Tory Club; and I saw, at once, several persons whom I knew. It was a splendid room, at least fifty feet high, with mirrors around the walls, and mirrors in the very ceiling There was sumptuous entertainment, and multitudinous company. Some were supping; others playing chess, always a favourite game in Troy since King Laomedon liked it; others merely drinking the nepenthe of the country. Alouette, who knew everybody, pointed out to me Hector and Paris chatting together. Hector looked a little like "a big brother," and was evidently attempting to insinuate advice of some sort or other (probably about Helen), but the graceless scamp of Ida leaned back in his chair, and picked his

teeth with negligence, and was saying, as we passed,

"My dear fellow, you may be older than I, but you have seen nothing of the world. It is absurd for a Troy Cockney like you to talk about prudence and propriety to a man who has decided which of the goddesses was most beautiful, and who has for his guerdon the loveliest woman of the world, the daughter of Zeus. As to Here and Artemis, well—you know all about that. You may lecture away, my dear brother, but you can't cure the incurable. I am smitten with the inveterate disease of love. Ask Helen."

"Think of Oenone," groaned Hector.

"I do—devilish often," said Alexander. "Nice child, but rustic. You wouldn't compare that little villager with a lady of divine birth like Helen, married to the King

of Sparta? 'Gad, what a lovely moonlight there was on Eurotas when I took Helen away, while Menelaus was stupefying himself with hot Lacedæmonian wine!"

"You are incorrigible!" said the tamer of horses. "I suppose you must take your course."

"My dear brother, you are the first of the Trojans. It is a question whether you or Achilleus Pelides is the first man in the world. It is no question that I possess the first woman in the world. And you know what Cassandra says . . ."

"Θ confound Cassandra!"

"No, don't—she's a good girl; and even a family like ours need not object to a daughter's intrigue with Apollo. No, I like Cassandra better than any other of my fifty sisters. She's too clever by half. However, you know what she says?"

"What?"

"That I shall kill Achilles."

"*You*, boy!" said Hector, in a rage.

"Yes, I daresay it isn't true. I care very little, as I regard Achilles as a thorough cad. Fancy the cowardly cur in petticoats with Omphale. Faith, I hope Omphale made her handmaidens flog the effeminate hero!"

Hector laughed a lusty laugh. *Ἔστησε*, who had heard the conversation, which indeed courted no privacy, took a chair and sat at their table, giving me a friendly nod of dismissal. He evidently designed to talk with Hector and Paris.

I turned to Alouette. She was laughing, silently.

"He'll talk them to death," she said, "and what will Homer think? Isn't it too bad?"

"Dreadful," I replied. "But come, what are you and I to do just now?"

"I am going to have a few minutes' conversation with Apollo, who has just come down to see how matters are going on, and who has promised to secure me a seat for the Olympus concerts that are so fashionable now. Good-bye—I see him."

Alouette ran off rapidly. Apollo Ekaërgos had shot through the air like a shaft from his own bow. They met outside the Troy Tory Club. I left them together—though, after his conduct to Daphne, it must be admitted that he is not the sort of person that the guardian of an innocent virgin would entirely approve.

Being now companionless, as *Ἔσπερε* had gone off to moralize the world, and Alouette to demoralize it, I wandered through room after room in aimless fashion. I came at last to a small room in which stood a statue. It was a female figure, life-size, in white marble; it writhed with some unutterable

woe; you might say the marble wept. The sculptor must have been a man of glorious genius, for he had given to solid marble, like that of Pentelicus, the sad depression, the quivering agony, of human flesh. It was painfully beautiful.

As I gazed on this wondrous work of art, fascinated yet tortured by its agonized beauty, I heard a step. I turned.

She who entered was tall, pale, with yellow hair falling plenteously over her shoulders, with a wistful prophetic gaze in the bluest eyes I ever saw. They were too blue, too clear, too deep. She looked on the lovely anguished marble and said, in a low whisper,

"*Troy!*"

It seemed to me, as I heard that word, as if all the deep sorrows of Troy, told by Homer, were crushed into it. I said nothing. No words could have been uttered

in the presence of those prophetic watcher eyes, in the very depths of which there seemed to be great tears like diamonds hidden in sapphire.

"This is Troy," she said with a sigh. "I am Cassandra. Apollo has kissed my lips."

What whims one has! Having lived in a quite different world—for it is a long way from Piccadilly to Troy—I wondered whether I ought to challenge her.

Beautiful unhappy [illegible] Prophetess-daughter of a [illegible]

CHAPTER V.

TROY.

"Κασσάνδρα περὶ τῶν μελλόντων προδηλοῖ."

CASSANDRA. Like unto golden Aphrodite: *ἰκέλη χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ.* Yes, it was she. Perchance no other woman had ever so sad or so grand a fate. But in this new Troy, transferred to a new planet, perhaps with a new destiny, I was quite ready to forget my Homer. As Alouette had run away to flirt with Apollo, I did not see any reason why I should not be at least polite to dear old Priam's beautiful daughter. Nor did I regret my slight civility.

I took her by the hands, and tried to

fathom the depth of those marvellous blue eyes. It was vain. There lay within them incredible prophecy of too certain disaster to the noble city whereof Homer has sung.

"Ah," said she, "this is Troy, and will be Troy for ever in the glory of golden verse; a magic city, with a terrible doom. I am Cassandra, and divine Apollo has clasped me in his arms with absolute love, and given me the sweet gift of foresight. Yes, but no one will believe me. 'Tis no matter; what is the use of knowing the to-morrow? Two other cities almost great as Troy there will be in the world unsettled yet. Neither will have a Cassandra; they may have a Helen, beauty maddening all the world; a Hector, hero greater than the world; a Paris, creature lovelier than woman; but never a Cassandra. I alone, having touched Apollo's lips, and having heard the sweet strange music of his natural song, and having felt the fierce

I thought of Shakespeare, and was in love with Cassandra at once.

I have been blamed for so suddenly falling in love with Cassandra. So far as I can understand my distant relations, who have . . . well . . . an interest in my welfare is the correct phrase, there are three objections.

1. She is older than I.

That I deny. Since I have been in Mars I have discovered, by the records of the Heralds' College of that planet, that I am the man who once was Adam.

This is, of course, decisive.

2. She has been talked about with Apollo.

"O dear me!
Where is the lady,
Who has never beside the sea,
Or where heather and furze bloom free,
Or under woodland shady,
Taken a kiss?
Was it a miss,
Lady, lady, lady?

"O dear me!
What will follow,
When there's a minute of joyous glee,
When a kissable mouth you see,
And its tempting beats you hollow?
Why despond
If your corespond-
ent is joyous Apollo?"

After all, you know, Apollo is mere sunshine, and perchance the lady's love might be mere moonshine. But . . . and this is a devilish determinate *but* . . . I never could love a lady—whom I loved at all—less because she had interchanged a few kisses in the gaiety of youth. What a direful prim prig she would be if she hadn't! Have *I* kissed nobody?

Ah!

3. She is a professional prophetess: What nonsense! She is as good as an estate in Leicestershire. I shall go to Stationers' Hall and arrange for publishing the Cassandra Almanac at once.

Among the women of Troy I thought Cassandra the most beautiful, as certainly she was the wisest. I wish I could put her on paper. No painter could do it. She was voice and eye. Her voice startled you —her eye held you. Andromache was all bosom. Helen was . . . But the clear, keen eye of Cassandra, and her exquisite contralto voice, made me forget all my earthly engagements, and go in for a fierce flirtation. You know what men are!

A prophetess is really a temptation. Fancy the luxury of a wife who could tell you all the events of the day before you drank in bed your matutinal coffee. That would be a noble idea. Cassandra says:

"If you go shooting to-day, you'll kill plenty of game."

Or—"If you go into the City to-day, you'll successfully swindle somebody."

Or—"If you ride in the Row to-day, you'll meet Incognita."

Or—"If you stay at home to-day, your uncle will make his will in your favour."

And in all these cases she will be speaking the truth. Unhappily, that villanous flirting son of Leto has laid a spell upon her, so that even her husband could not believe her, much as he might try. He would go into the City when she counselled him to look after the birds, or see Incognita in the Row when he should wait at home for his venerable pecunious uncle.

In the Troy Tory Club we had a very pleasant little dinner that day—Cassandra, Alouette, Ἔστησε, and I. It was a new sensation. There was choice cookery of quite unusual kinds; the culinary artists of Ilion had devised original dinners during the time of that immortal ten years' siege, and the fashion of them remained; and,

after the dinner was over, we w
general saloon, where there
brilliant society.

There was Helen. I have si
Leighton's attempt to depict h
entirely from imagination. I
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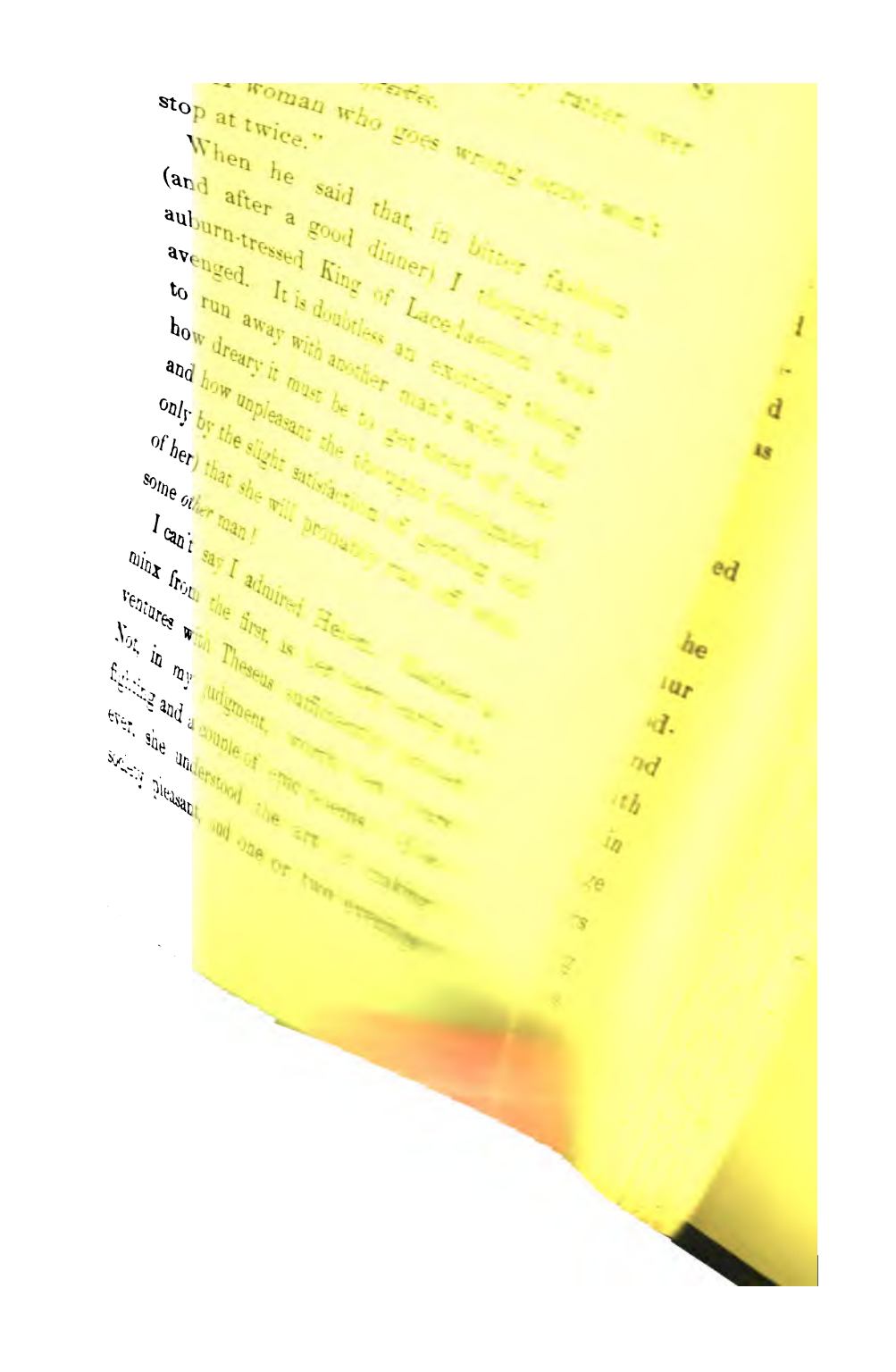
Much more like Cassandra wa
artist's Helen. The sister of
was of middle height, brown-h
eyed, with small soft hands,
about her, a merry twinkle
tendency to low bodices, an
showing her ankles. Everyb
Troy that she was much liker
to her reputed father; and I
lieve it. Indeed all the ladies i
jealous of her, since she was m
ous than even Cressida. As



after the dinner was over, we went into the general saloon, where there was a most brilliant society.

There was Helen. I have since seen Mr. Leighton's attempt to depict her, of course entirely from imagination. Had he consulted me, I would have lent him a charming sketch of her, which Apollo made one day on the back of a note from Cassandra. Much more like Cassandra was the modern artist's Helen. The sister of the Dioscuri was of middle height, brown-haired, brown-eyed, with small soft hands, a wicked way about her, a merry twinkle in her eye, a tendency to low bodices, an artistic way of showing her ankles. Everybody said in Troy that she was much liker to Leda than to her reputed father; and I can well believe it. Indeed all the ladies in Troy were jealous of her, since she was more dangerous than even Cressida. As Paris once

remarked to me, mournfully rather, over some *φάρμακον νηπενθὲς*,

"A woman who goes wrong once, won't stop at twice."

When he said that, in bitter fashion (and after a good dinner) I thought the auburn-tressed King of Lacedaemon was avenged. It is doubtless an exciting thing to run away with another man's wife; but how dreary it must be to get tired of her, and how unpleasant the thought (mitigated only by the slight satisfaction of getting rid of her) that she will probably run off with some *other* man!

I can't say I admired Helen. Rather a minx from the first, as her very early adventures with Theseus sufficiently proved. Not, in my judgment, worth ten years' fighting and a couple of epic poems. However, she understood the art of making society pleasant, and one or two evenings

Ἔστησε and I spent at Paris's palace in Alexander Square were uncommonly delightful. The young prince deserved Homer's epithet, *θεοειδὴς*. There was never anyone more beautiful. When I saw him, I understood why Zeus had made him the supreme arbiter of beauty—the judge between the trinity of goddesses.

Paris was the best company in the world. I thought Helenus rather like Mr. Pitt, and Nestor like the Duke of Wellington. But Paris was as adventurous as Grammont, and as witty as Luttrell. We had one grand night together; Helen didn't know; *Ἔστησε* and Alouette were engaged on a spiritual séance, or an æsthetic tea, or a meeting for the mutilation of unmitigated muffs. So Paris, finding I was not engaged, said to me at the Club,

"Let's have a jolly evening. Helen's got a grand concert; and music always

gives me a confounded headache. Who do you think has just come to Troy?"

"Who?" I asked.

"[illegible] beautiful daughter of the phaesimbrotous Sun. She is here with all her mischief, all her music, all her fun. I like Circe, though perhaps she goes a little too far sometimes; but she extinguished a great many fools and [illegible] and for that she deserves kudos. [illegible] proved a useful island, lessening the number of hospitals and [illegible] asylums. If a fellow comes [illegible] himself a poet, Circe turns him into a dog, and has him whipt when he [illegible]. If he professes to be an independent [illegible] tial statesman, she [illegible] him, and allows him [illegible]. When she catches a brave [illegible] phoses him into a [illegible] small army of [illegible]

"Has she got any followers of that sort here?" I asked.

"She may perhaps have one or two," said Paris, "but if so, they will be the quietest specimens."

"And you don't think she'll try to turn you or me into any sort of quadruped?"

"Since I saw those three goddesses on Ida," said Paris, "I have been magic-proof. As for you, it will be your own fault if you let Circe befool you. I can imagine a man's being cheated by her in her own island, but not in this sober city Troy."

The sobriety of Troy had not struck me, but I could not contradict the King's son; so I accepted his opinion, and went with him to Circe's. It was a jolly reception; lots of the fastest people in Troy; only two lions in the room, who lay quietly on the hearthrug, and bit nobody, so far as I know.

Circe is not quite my style. Very tall,

bright blue eyes, immensely [illegible] and the most lovely [illegible] world . . . finer than even [illegible] must say I wonder [illegible] about her. She and [illegible] familiar terms; when she [illegible] songs for his delectation. [illegible] brilliant concert. Thus she sang:

"I am the daughter of the [illegible]
And you the [illegible]
The goddesses were [illegible]
The world well knows what you have [illegible]
But did you make your [illegible]
Ah, did you do your [illegible]"

"I want a little flattery.
So, Alexandros, please have mercy.
You tried grave look and [illegible]
Tested with care each [illegible]
Tell me, was Aphrodite much
More beautiful than [illegible]"

"O it was sad to be caught in the morning
All without warning, when the dye
Of Apollo could smite my shoulders white!
Helen has bathed here: why not I?

"O it was sweet that they who caught me
Only thought me a thoughtless thing . . .
Quite forgave the limbs' soft wave . . .
Shut their eyes as I took wing."

Of course *Ἔστησε* and I thought it wise to verify the verse. We walked decorously away, and botanically examined the ruddy Nerine of Simoïs. Presently Alouette joined us, laughing, and as ruddy as the oleander itself.

"We may do anything before breakfast and before Troy," said *Ἔστησε*. "Now, Alouette and Antony, let us charter centaurs and visit Rome."

"Centaurs!" I said.

"Rome!" said Alouette.

"I happen to know *δικαιότατος Κενταύρων*," he said; "he taught Asklepios and Achilles all they knew, and would have taught them

more if they could have [illegible]
him yesterday. He is very [illegible]
Goethe has told me [illegible]
through friends [illegible]
if he could give me [illegible]
try. I told him I was [illegible]
wanted to try some [illegible]
arranged we should [illegible]

"Rome!" I cried.

"And, by Apollo, [illegible]
"*Eternal*.

The conversation was [illegible]
magnificent [illegible]
steeds: never saw [illegible]
wood aught so [illegible]
the two young mares [illegible]
him. Cheiron [illegible]
his glorious human [illegible]
(for has he not been [illegible]
at least three thousand [illegible]
as ever and [illegible]

mighty loins like a mere butterfly. Off he sprang across the asphodel meadow.

"Many a lady has threaded her pretty fingers through my old tangled mane," he said.

The two mare Centaurs were bright bay and chestnut. *Ἔστησε* chose the chestnut, a lovely creature enough, but with fiery eyes. The bay suited me excellent well; her eyes were mild and soft, and when I caught her strong sides between my thighs, she knew her master. No bridles and saddles of course, when you ride Centaurs . . . specially if they understand Greek—or Trojan. Touch the cheek; say a word in the ear; move the leg on the loin. My bay Centaur, who told me her name was Proaxis, ran away from *Ἔστησε* on the chestnut. But we failed to overtake Cheiron, running away with Alouette. Talk of Flying Childers and Eclipse! Try the aged son of Chronos and

Ph[illegible] [illegible] him renewal [illegible] whether [illegible] Is there a [illegible]

I talked to Proaxis [illegible] ly little gossip [illegible] favour of the female [illegible] not [illegible] fingers. Hence the [illegible] girl sends to sisters and sweethearts under a penny stamp is compressed into pleasant conversation by the mares that are daughters of Chronos—otherwise Time. What can be pleasanter than to ride on one of them and hear her talk?

"How old are you?" I asked Proaxis, patting her pretty bay neck.

"O, I'm a filly!" she said, with a fling that would have thrown many a rider. "I'm about two thousand, I think. Cheiron

[illegible]

would know within a century. I'm only half broke."

"That's very clear," I said, "but if you throw me I'll eat you. Come, little mare, don't be frisky; here's a jolly sunk fence . . . let's take it like a bird."

Another pat on the neck. That's the way to manage anything female. We swam over the heavy hawthorn, and came into the meadow below with perfect ease.

"Pretty thing!" I said.

Even Centaur mares are manageable creatures. I was amused with Proaxis. I had only a vague idea where "Εστησε wanted to go. Presently I saw a tavern, so I thought I would pull up and wait for my guide, philosopher, and friend. Proaxis was rather loth, wanting a lark.

Supposing, dear reader, you had ridden a Centaur mare from Troy to the suburbs of Rome—and supposing it was a bright bay

tion. You should have seen dear immemorial Cheiron drink that wine . . . or any other.

We had quite a sentimental parting with our friends, the Centaurs, who trotted back towards their stables in Troy. But we wished to get into Rome for an oyster supper with Catullus, whom *"Εστησε* (who, I believe, wanted to see Lesbia) praised as a master of hendecasyllabics; and of course Alouette had to put her pretty brown hair in order, after a ride on Cheiron, before supping with the Veronese; so we told the landlord to send at once for what, in London is called a brougham. It was in Rome known as a cicero. It was well-horsed; but the fellow charged us too much for taking us to the Palatine Hill.

"Hurrah!" said Catullus, meeting me with those bright, scintillating eyes of his, as I came over *Cave canem* to the cooler part of

the corridor. I knew him at once. "Lesbia is here," he said, "Cæsar is coming. Very likely Mark Antony."

"I shall have to change your pseudonym, old fellow," says Ἕστησε. "I have been calling our friend Mark Antony, as he possesses some heathen name which one cannot pronounce unless one has a cough."

In came Cæsar and Antony, friends whose friendship one at once understood. Power and grace arm-in-arm. Cæsar like a Cornish wrestler . . . breadth equal to length. Antony tall, radiant, slender. Cæsar's voice would stir an army; Antony's whisper would madden a woman. Indeed, remarks which they made at Valerius's table that night, sufficiently indicated the difference between the two friends.

"No man shall ever beat me," said Julius.

"Nor any woman me," quoth Marcus.

"The oddity of this planet," suddenly

said Ἔστησε, "is, that it has no moon. have considered this subject with much ca since I have resided here, and, my concl sion is that planets should be constructe without moons. The devil's in the moo for mischief! How in the world they g on in Saturn and Uranus, where there we eight moons each when the last ba loon mail arrived, is to me a my tery. Knowing what I do of the terren moon's influence on lunatics, lovers, poet the tides, and the almanac-makers, I a almost tempted to visit an eight-moone planet, to ascertain the result. It must h Bedlam broken loose. Eight moons!"

"Has it occurred to you," said Mar Antony, "that, according to Pythagora or some such swell, all these planets ar moons to the sun? How deuced mad th sun-folk must be with such a lot of moon and moonlets!"

"I should like to see some of their poetry," said the Veronese.

"*O rem ridiculam, Cato, et* [illegible]," says Cæsar. "Do you think they are [illegible] madder than that?"

Everybody laughed. Ἔστησε took up the parable in his usual fashion, and set to work to connect logic with astrography.

"I have not worked out the whole question," he said; "but Earth is the home of the dilemma, and Mars of the epigram."

"Explain," said Cæsar. "Certainly I was on the horns of a dilemma when I crossed the Rubicon."

"As was Alexander when he cut the Gordian knot," said Ἔστησε. "It is the destiny on earth of all men, great or small. Take the old story of the king who built a bridge, and erected a gallows at the end of it, to hang every traveller who did not tell truly why he crossed. There came a

pilgrim who declared that his especial purpose was to be hanged on that gallows. What could the toll-man do? If he hanged him, he had told the truth, and ought not to have been hanged; if he did not hang him, he ought to have been hanged for lying."

"I guess what he did," said Mark Antony; "hanged him, buried his body, and made no report to the King. But go on with your theory."

"'Tis simple enough. Take health: if on earth you would be healthy, you must resign everything that renders health worth having. You must never wet your feet in shooting or fishing for fear of rheumatism, nor drink wine for fear of gout, nor eat a good dinner for fear of indigestion. Here you find no such annoyances; the air is light-giving, the water life-giving, the flowers are sustenant and medicinal. We

cannot forget the habits of earth—we like oysters and wine; but many natives of this pleasant planet live wholly on the fragrance of flowers and the stimulant water of the streams. Then the remedies of earth are barbarous. The man who has not a grain of hope takes a grain of opium: revivified for an hour or two, he is worse directly after, and seems like a corpse that has been galvanized. Oh! I love Mars, and mean to stay here. Earth was not so good to me that I should care to revisit the glimpses of the moon."

"And how is that to be done?" I asked.

"The moment one of us earthmen wishes to return to earth, he is there," said [illegible].

"Ah!" thought I, remembering my [illegible] Lucy and my wasted life, "no such wish is mine. Mars for me."

"No better oysters than these," said our host, "had [illegible]

oris. And every oyster holds a pearl, wherefore I compare the Mars oyster to a perfect lyric, which is pleasant for its beauty of style, and which also always contains a single poetic idea."

Lesbia all this while had been eating the small plump beardless oysters from their concave shells, and daintily putting aside pearl after pearl from each, just as earthly damsels put aside the cherries from a tart. Nothing had she said, except now and then in a whisper to Valerius or Marcus, between whom she sat. Every whisper brought a light laugh.

"You might turn that thought into just such a lyric as you describe," said *Ἔστησε.*

The Veronese responded:

"Ay, full oft have I, looking as my lady
Put her pearls away with a dainty finger,
Pure pearls, fair to see where the bosom rosy
Trembles lovingly when the night is silent,
Deemed how sweet it were could a poet only
Make songs welcome as oysters are to maidens,

Each song hiding a pearl of love within it,
Each pearl fit to be worn where Love is dwelling.
Sure things might be so in this lucky planet.
Happy orb it is, since an oyster supper
Always gives to the lady eating plenty,
Girdle, necklet, bracelets for the morning."

Lesbia laughed, and went on with her oysters in a business-like way. Mark Antony filled her glass with *merus Thyonianus*, and said,

"I must have a copy of that, Valerius."

"Take it on memory's tablet," he said. "Who will go on board my new yacht to-morrrow? I am for an exploring trip. I want to see some of the strange lake-birds I hear of."

"I am for the senate," said Caius Julius.

"And I," said Antony.

But "*Εστηρε* would go, and Alouette was nothing loth, and I resolved to join them. It was sunrise when our symposium ended. Slave-girls took Alouette to her couch;

Ἔσπησε and I took a walk into the open air, but in the vestibule, pausing, he drank from a small fountain of water, by which crystal cups were placed. Then he took a rose from a basket hard by, and inhaled its fragrance.

"Do as I do," he said. "The flowers and waters of Mars cure all the evils that proceed from the viands and wines of earth."

We wandered to an open square, where splashed water from the mouths of many life-sized marble lions into an immense basin. The sun was low, and the shadow of a great temple was thrown right across the tesserae of the wide square.

"As yet no stir of life," *Ἔσπησε* said. "What I told you just now made you look thoughtful. At a wish, you can return to Earth."

"I have no such wish."

"It may come, and suddenly. This is the world in which Bishop Berkeley's dream comes true, and mind creates matter. You have seen Troy and Rome—they are echoes of earth. Have you not, on our own planet, seen cities in the clouds, faces in the fire, wonders in the water? They passed too soon. They are no more real than these."

"Am I then dreaming?"

"No, I think not. It is rather vision than dream. I guess what it is, though I cannot tell you in words. If this city were to pass away at once, I should nowise wonder. I have been talking to a man I knew in earth, and he has vanished suddenly, and I felt sure he was recalled thither."

As I was pondering the strangeness of this, the earlier life of the city awoke. Tall slave-girls with yellow hair came down to

the fountains, with jars on their heads to fetch water. These had blue serious eyes; but next came black-haired black-eyed girls, with flowers and fruit, which they offered from white wicker baskets. There were cream cheeses too, and other country cakes.

"Let us breakfast," said Ἑστησε. "Though a long resident here, I have never conquered my earthly appetite. Look at those great purple figs."

We were sitting on the marble edge of the basin. Two shapely dark young damsels knelt before us, offering their baskets.

"It seems absurd," said Ἑστησε, "when you have just finished supper; but I never could resist these rustic delights; and the air and water of Mars will digest anything. Let me tell you that both figs and grapes go capitally with cream cheese. I was a Devonshire man, and knew something of

the virtues of blending fruit with cream."

The temptation was too great. I followed Ἔστησε's example.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POET'S YACHT.

"Phaselus ille! . . ."

TIBER received us in the afternoon, and the poet's yacht, a gaily-decorated well-built craft, that he managed with the aid of a couple of boys, danced merrily down the stream. Geography in Mars is not the geography of Earth; old Father Tiber took us into a strange clear tideless lake, with shores so high, and trees so high above the shores, that the wind could hardly reach our sails. When that happened, the boys had to row, and rowed rather lazily. It was a small craft; you might

just walk up and down the deck, with a keen eye to the sides. Ἔστησε, a peripatetic philosopher, who loved to walk as he lectured, was sometimes slightly puzzled to maintain his equilibrium.

Thus we went, Valerius and Lesbia, Alouette and Ἔστησε and I, through waters strangely beautiful. I have forgotten little Snow, whom Ἔστησε insisted on calling Chione, and who had travelled with us all the way—nursed in her mistress's lap, as she rode on the back of Cheiron. Snow was great fun on this our voyage, making darts over the side after water-birds, and being fished out again by one of the yacht-boys, who would plunge in to her aid when swan or merganser became dangerous to the daring little thing.

"That naughty little dog will be drowned, I know," Alouette would exclaim; but Chione was not drowned, and is probably

barking merrily on Mars to this present day.

The string of lakes, connected by a river, through which we voyaged, was the most curiously beautiful bit of scenery I had yet seen. It silenced "*Εστησε*'s effluent eloquence; he could only gaze. The first lake we entered was narrow, but long; it reminded me of the upper reach of Windermere; but, on each side there rose densely wooded cliffs, almost perpendicular, four hundred feet high; and on the summits of those cliffs, grew trees as high as the cliffs themselves, with branches so wide of spread that they often almost met in the middle of the lake. Hence the gloom would have been intense, would have been horrid, unendurable, but for two things. One was the ruddy light which dwells in every atom of the atmosphere of Mars, rendering a Mars midnight lovelier than many a noon that I have seen in Earth; the other, the clarity of the trans-

lucent water, that seemed to be built up of millions of diamonds crushed to the finest dust. Though we sailed between those awful cliff-walls, above which soared tree-giants that dwarfed the Californians, the ruddy ether streaming down met the diamond water flashing up, and the scene was delicious. Through the great boughs came vast birds, strangely tame, that would alight on the yacht; small birds also of extreme beauty, flying rubies and emeralds, were just as tame; one lovely little creature, about the size of a lady's thimble, flew straight into Lesbia's bosom, and would not be sent away.

"That is a love-bird," said Valerius.

Then, in the clear water below, as we looked over the edge of the yacht, we saw the beautiful fish swimming. Also we beheld the cities which are built in Mars by men who love dwelling under water—cities

built of superb materials, such as are found far down in the planet.

Save the cities borrowed from Earth, on the land of Mars there are no cities—only villages. The King of Mars himself lives in a village. But, as there are Marsmen with a city-building desire, they are allowed to found cities at the bottoms of lakes and live in the water—it being provided that no tower or spire is to come within five fathom of the lake's usual surface.

It is found that, even in so fortunate a planet as Mars, there are persons who prefer living under water to living in the air. I have heard that similar strange preferences are discoverable in other planets. Some one told me once that he considered Capel Court the happiest nook in England. These sublacustrine cities were lovely to look upon from above. Alouette was never tired of admiring. We got what may be called a

yacht's-eye view of them, and could see the gentlemen and ladies walking the watery streets, in costumes not unlike those used by French bathers. I do not think this was for modesty; it was partly for adornment, and partly because living under water (even in Mars) gets chilly in time. People who desert fresh air for the sake of living in cities will bear a great deal—especially if 'tis the fashion.

Presently we passed from the first lake into a narrow river. The cliffs stopped abruptly here, and for a mile or more we were in water much like the Thames at Henley. Ah, but how many a Henley rower would be glad if he could do as we did . . . dip the hollow of the hand, and drink pure water stimulant as wine. Better gift than Undine's, who had but to dip her hand over the boat's side into the Danube, to draw forth a chaplet of pearls.

I said something of the same sort to Ἔσπερε.

"It can be done even in Earth," he said. "I knew, and shall know again, one man to whom water was as the water of Mars."

The river brought us into a lake lying lengthwise, at right angles to the one we had left. On either hand we could see through miles of woodland, and at each end there seemed to be great piles of building. But the river crossed the lake (half a mile wide), and broke through on the other side; and when Valerius said, "What shall we do?" Lesbia replied, "Follow the river."

We followed the river. It was a tortuous stream, this time, with sloping woods on the left and an immense sweep of green undivided meadow, full of the crown imperial on the right. On that meadow bank great red oxen came to the verge, and opened

their Hera-like eyes, and lowed musically . . . and turned tail in dismay when Snow rushed to the side and barked with feminine vehemence.

The stream grew more rapid. We rounded a promontory, where a huge mass of red rock, rising abruptly from the meadow, blocked our view. We passed through a narrow gorge into a lake that was almost a perfect elipse.

What a scene! Villages all around it, for miles on every side. Sunset was on the sky and on the lake below. One of those sunsets, wherein everything on the planet below seems turned into a glory above; when you see cathedrals in the clouds, and great armies, and innumerable palaces by winding rivers. It was such a sunset.

"With a heart at ease," said *Ἑστησε*, "I have drawn much delight from many sunsets

in many planets; but aught like this has never amazed my vision. Will any one tell me which is cloud and which fact? That spire which shoots into the very zenith, bearing on its summit what seems the figure of an angel, looks solid."

"It *is* solid," said Alouette excitedly. "That is our great church. The figure on the summit is Michael the Archangel. That village where it stands is the village of the King."

The village was right opposite, and we were already sailing toward it. The mighty spire threw a broad path of shadow across the lake, and the cathedral itself was about four times the size of the great Pyramid. There was nothing else noticeable about the village except a large tent, with a banner in front of it and a flag at its apex. I asked Alouette what it was.

"That's where the King lives," she said.

"He always lives in a tent. When he wants to go to another place, his tent goes with him."

"But what do you call your nation?" asked *Ἔστησε*. "And who is the King of the next nation?"

I believe he did this to puzzle the child, having already found out that the whole planet is subject to one king. She was puzzled. His words had no meaning to her. I, at the moment, thought merely that she had the Chinese notion that their Emperor rules the world. The idea that Mars, though only half the Earth's diameter, could be quietly ruled by one king, rather amazed an Englishman who had seen his nation thrash Napoleon.

While we were talking, Valerius had steered the yacht out of the direct line, and we found ourselves in a pretty little bay, apparently about a mile from the King's

village. We all went ashore save Lesbia; then Valerius, apologetically, said to *Ἕστησε* and me:

"You know what it is. One must obey the wildest word of a woman you wildly love. Lesbia says she must go home at once, or die. As I don't want her to die, I'll take her back, and then come and fetch you."

"Don't think of it," said *Ἕστησε*. "You are a fortunate man to be able to obey a lady's caprice. I wish I could. It is so hard to find either the lady or the will to obey. Don't think of us. Travel is easy in Mars. We will call and see you when we are next your way."

Catullus went down the steep green shore, and sprang into the yacht, and off it flew, with Lesbia astern, a pretty creature of many colours. *Ἕστησε* sat on the turf and

laughed, while Alouette and I were watching the swift yacht pass the sunset mirrored on the waters.

"All women are birds," he said. "She is a kingfisher. Do you know the meaning of this? She can't bear another woman. If our little Alouette had not been with us, she'd have been as brilliant as possible at supper."

"What a pity!" said Alouette.

"Pity! No, indeed. The only person I pity is our friend the poet. However, he'll find her out one of these days—and then there'll be some sharp work."

The yacht by this time was out of sight. The sunset was fading.

"It was cool of him to leave us so abruptly," he said. "How did he know we should find quarters?"

"Custom of Mars, my dear Mark. You

can't be benighted in Mars. You can't walk a mile without coming to a house, or enter a house door without receiving hospitality. This being so, nobody need trouble himself about his friends. If he deserts them, they will find other friends. Come, instead of arguing this matter to the utmost, let us go and see what the King's village is like. I am curious. I like the idea of a King's living under a tent and in a village, and making the fellows who *must* build cities do it under water."

Off we walked, along the green edge of the cliff, Chione barking wildly around us. Presently a winding lane: then we came upon the village green—a beautiful open common, with well grown trees, and a rivulet running through it. Boys and girls were shouting and playing in the even-glome, and lads and lasses sweet-hearting;

elder folk moralizing. It was a jolly scene, but we passed it, in order to find an inn.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING OF MARS.

"A king lived long ago
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now."

THERE was no need. As we crossed a foot-bridge over a bright rivulet, we were met by a messenger—a youth of about eighteen, apparently, dressed in a green tunic, and holding a white wand in his hand.

"You are strangers," he said. "You are welcome. We saw your yacht cross the lake. Permit me, on the part of the king, to offer you refreshment and rest."

"Εστησε, spokesman of our trio, accepted with grateful eloquence; and Florio, as this young gentleman was named (he being one of the king's pages), led us to a white tent near to the king's, which we afterwards found had been pitched purposely for us when we were seen to approach from the opposite side of the lake. The Royal Pavilion towered enormously above us, with its great standard floating to the wind above a mighty mass of colour; our modest tent looked a mere handbell by its side. But when we entered, we found ample space. It was, as I guess, about fifty feet in height to the apex, and twice as many in the diameter of the circle it enclosed. The outside, I have said, was white; the lining was a soft blue; the hangings were scarlet. In the centre the red flame of a pyrogen lamp burnt delightfully under a grass green shade. The famous chemist (more than once mentioned

already) explained to me a most simple process of extracting pyrogen from either air or water, so as to give light. Indeed he had invented a method of obtaining instantaneous light at night from the water in your carafe.

The interior of our tent had spaces curtained off at several points, and we found our conveniences as ample as if we had been in a house—much ampler, I must say, than in many houses I had entered on my native planet.

Returning to the central apartment of the tent, we saw a perfect banquet prepared for us: gold and crystal charmed the eye; flowers of unutterable beauty stood in vases made of hollow gems, while around them fluttered tame butterflies of marvellous hues.

"We tame all creatures," said Florio, in answer to my look of surprise. "It is a fa-

vourite profession among us. You must visit our Paradise."

"Ah," said Ἕστιος, "that Persian word is used in its true sense here. It means a park for all kinds of animals."

We were waited on by a series of young pages, all dressed in Florio's style; and during the meal a charming concert of music was audible at such a distance as not too fully to occupy the ear. It seemed to me, ignorant entirely of scientific music, and only liking an air without being able to account for the liking, that there was something quite new and strange in the melodies that came floating through the rosy evening air.

Florio, who acted as butler, and behaved to us as if we were a princess and two princes, brought us, as coronal of the banquet, two special delicacies sent by the King. There was a bloom for each of us of

the Lost Rose of Troy; its imperishable fragrance, softly stimulant, is enough to make one credit Florio's tale, that it causes men to be strong and women beautiful. Its colour defies description; the outer petals seem pale with passion, while the core is blood-red with love—and there is a luminous life in every leaf caught from the fiery atmosphere of Mars.

"How beautiful!" said Alouette, bathing her delicate nostrils in the impalpable odour. "This is the flower of flowers."

"*Ut rosa flos florum, sic alauda avis avium*," said "Εστησε. "But what scintillates in that crystal flask, throwing up sparks of fire through the white fluid?"

"That," said Florio, "is water of Mars, bottled at the King's birth. Our water improves by being bottled, in a wonderful way; the King never gives this to any but most favoured visitors."

"Why are we so favoured?" asked *"Εστησε*, who had filled his glass.

"You come from Earth, which is the King's favourite planet. But what have you done? See!"

The strong water, as if it had been fluoric acid, had melted the glass away.

"We keep this either in diamond or platinum," said Florio.

Boys brought diamond goblets, and we drank our precious lymph. Zeus! How it cleared the palate and throbbed at the heart! How it gave light to the eye and fire to the nerve! We looked each at the other in silence; *"Εστησε* seemed young again; Alouette's changeable eyes were like two strong sapphires with a core of flame in each.

"You look positively handsome, Mark," said *"Εστησε* to me. "How long has this *merum nectar* been in bottle, Florio?"

"We don't know. The King has forgotten how old he is."

"I don't wonder," said *Ἔστησε* to me. "You see there are no clocks and watches in Mars, and months and weeks and days and hours have long been given up; indeed, they could not have months, you know, without a moon. The absence of a moon, by the way, prevents lunatics, tides, and several other absurdities. However, they try to keep their years, which are uncommonly long ones; and there's an observatory where a set of ancient gentlemen keep watch on the stars—a kind of Mars Greenwich. Unluckily, these old fogies lose count now and then, and drop a year or two; and, as there is no one to look after them, time has become a will-o'-the-wisp in this planet. Nobody can ever guess what year it is."

"Since when?" I asked.

"Ah, another difficulty. Nothing unpleasant ever happens here, so there's no definite point to date from. By the way, Florio, has the King any special reason for liking us Earthmen?"

"When he was a boy," said Florio, "a visitor from Earth came, called *'OMHPOΣ*. He made poems, which the King learnt, and can recite now."

"Of course the Court listens blandly. That gives the date," he said to me. "If Homer came here when the King was a boy, he must be about thirty centuries old. No need that the King should ever die."

While we had been talking of the king, Alouette had slipt off to her nest; so we finished our water, and decided to do likewise. Rather to my surprise, our beds were hammocks of matting, with some fragrant substance underneath. They swung with a slow sleepy movement, hanging about six feet

above the ground. It was a new sensation to me, and I liked it well. Sleep came soon . . . only too soon; I wanted to dream over this strange world and all its amazing indwellers. I wanted to think about Alouette, with whom I grew half a love, in a half Platonic way. But sleep came irresistibly; and I dreamed of Ἑσπερίς's words about the mirage of this Mars-world; and in my vision I saw the tall towers of Troy and of Rome gradually slide from the sight and fade into mist, like some lovely creation of the clouds, like some fair fancy of a heated brain.

I was awoke by the sound of a bugle. If I must be roused from sleep, O let such music do it! It came over water, softened, sweetened, glorified; for the bugler was in a boat on the lake. The clear sound stole into my slumbers, making me dream, ere I woke, of things inspiriting . . . of the falcon in free air, the greyhound on the lea, the

maiden dancing on the green. I stretched in my hammock and listened. As I did this, the hammock fell gradually to the ground, and I was in a position to attend to matutinal necessities. When these had been duly dealt with, I walked out through the tent door, where I found *Ἔστησε* lounging. He was earlier than I. He had been wandering through the village of the King since sunrise.

"This is a queer place, Mark," he said. "We must stay here and observe the manners and customs of the natives. Over one doorway I saw the inscription which I have copied in my note-book . . .

N. O. Tfgs,
Poet.

Now I have been in Wales in my time, but I am at a loss to know how the poet, Tfgs, pronounces his name. It must be on some Hebrew principle, and he has forgotten his vowel-points. Besides, the notion of

a gentleman's announcing himself as a professional poet is rather queer. There were several others I have noted . . ."

At this moment he was interrupted by Florio, who told us the King asked us to breakfast with him. The Royal Tent faced the lake, a lovely lawn dividing it from the water. On this lawn, a few yards from the tent, a table was laid. As we went towards it, we were joined by Alouette, who had overslept herself and ignored the bugle, but who looked none the less lovely. We three walked across the lawn to this *al fresco* breakfast, and stood by the table at places assigned to us. Suddenly a bugle-call, and a double line of youths and girls formed an avenue from the tent door to the table. Then another higher richer note, and the old King came forth, walking slowly between this duplex line of children. He was very tall, had much white hair, and eyes of ruddy

violet under white brows and lashes. Those pink violets found wild in the quarry by Five Tree Hill give the colour of his eyes; but there was a strange strong splendour in them, of the gem rather than the flower. He walked erect, though using a strong staff—the royal sceptre of the *Iliad*—possibly nothing more than a spud, in days when even the gods were country gentlemen. Yet assuredly a cudgel, when Odysseus thrashed Thersites. He greeted us with royal courtesy, being specially polite to Alouette, whom he recognied as his own subject.

We breakfasted in the open air. The King was in high spirits, for, as we had heard, Earth was his favourite planet.

"I learned to like you from Homer," he said; "he came here in my youth, and established a theogony which became popular. Others of the same nation visited

us; Plato, Sophocles, Aristophanes. I thought Plato too wise, and Sophocles too perfect, and Aristophanes too farcical. Indeed, I was not satisfied till a short time after one Shakespeare arrived; and at once I saw that he was a man mixed up of virtues and faults, with such subtle division and apportionment of each, that he was the very type and embodiment of humanity. Every utterance he syllabled sufficed to show that Shakespeare was Earth. They are equal—those two. I wish my brief reign might include some one of equal power to indicate Mars."

"The time will come," quoth Ἔστησε, in his oracular way. He never could resist a chance prophecy.

"I hope so," said the King. "If our planet has a Shakespeare, he will have many advantages. He will not be able to cry Havoc! and let loose the dogs of war; but

he will be able to show the glory and gladness of perpetual peace—a peace that has never been broken, and never will. He will be unable to sing,

> 'Blow, blow, thou wintry wind!
> Thou are not so unkind
> As man's ungratitude.'

For we have no wintry winds here; and ingratitude is logically impossible, since there is nothing to be grateful for. Now, having read and worshipped your marvellous Shakespeare, I should like to get a poet of equal power here in Mars to deal with our quieter life. We have no Tragedies, no Comedies, no Histories."

"The poetry of Mars is an idyl," said Ἔστησε. "Appoint me your poet Laureate, and I will prove it."

The King summoned an official person, and appointed him at once. But at this moment there entered a curious per-

sonage, about seven feet high, with the thinnest legs and the highest forehead ever known. This turned out to be the Prime Minister, my Lord Ktadqxoi, who thought himself the first man in Mars, and was certainly not even the second. Strange it is that the inferior intellects rule, even in a planet like Mars, where the higher intellects have absolute power, if only they will exercise it. But in Mars the great statesman does very little harm. Individual life is the rule of the planet. As there is no indigestion, nobody quarrels; as there is no starvation, nobody steals. Eliminate from a planet quarrel and theft, and what has a great statesman to do?

"I have just appointed a Poet Laureate—Count Katdqxoi," said the king. "You must tell him his duties. I am getting tired of birthday odes—I have heard so many; but a fresh one in quite a different style might suit

me. Perhaps our friend will be able to do something of a higher character."

The Prime Minister and *"Εσπερε* walked off together presently; and I confess that I was sorry for my friend. Very shortly the King, having, I suppose, regal duties to perform (I cannot guess), dismissed me with that courtesy which pertains only to royal personages—at least, thus I am credibly informed.

Alouette and I walked into the village, and were amused by its irregularities. Everything was full of fun. Alouette, observe, was no mortal maiden, but the most bird-like creature ever placed in any planet of the Solar System. So she gave me charming guidance in this village of the King of Mars. She, a native of the planet, a young thing born on its surface, with pyrogen flushing her beautiful face, was able to

supply me with just the information I wanted.

Our first visit was to the eminent chemist who already has been named in these pages. The eminent chemist, the Liebig of Mars, told me several things which already have been mentioned. He certainly outdid your terrene Liebigs and the like. He showed me a very small pill-box, labelled,

"One Ox."

It contained an ox, or the essence of an ox, boiled down by chemical methods to a mere spoonful of meat. Swallow it, and you will want nothing more to eat for a year at least.

This chemist was amusing; he had several other scientific dodges; his applications of pyrogen were perfectly charming. But more amusing was the architect to whom Alouette introduced me. His name was Hine. He added (un unusual thing) mathematics and

cookery to his architecture. Alouette and I dined with him.

His was a house I liked. It was all on the ground-floor. There were no cellars—there was no upstairs.

"If you want to live long," said Hine, "conquer the attraction of gravitation. The greatest mistake we make is walking up hills and up stairs. I have just been building a place for Mr. Branscombe . . . Wolf Branscombe they call him about here . . . and I am sure he would be pleased if you would go over and look at it. He has a great number of visitors; but I have carried out my idea of building everything on one floor. I have made a group of houses: some for married people, some for bachelors, and all arranged around the house in which old Branscombe lives."

"Capital idea!" I said. "I think I knew Branscombe in some other world. Wasn't

his brother generally known as Devil Branscombe? Hadn't he a rather pretty niece called Claudia?"

"Oh, you know everybody," replied Hine. "Yes, that's the man; and you may possibly meet Claudia at Branscombe Manor. I won't be sure you don't encounter Raphael?"

Whereupon I proposed to Alouette that we should go and see Wolf Branscombe, telling her that I had some dim recollection of him on Earth; and Alouette had not the slightest objection in the world. So, with Hine's introduction, we went over to Branscombe Manor.

When we reached the place, our charioteer had to descend and blow a bugle, hung beside a drawbridge which crossed a wide moat. The whole place is enclosed by a moat, and completely isolated. Having 'got within this water boundary, we saw a

charming group of houses, arranged amid pleasant lawns. All were one-storeyed, but every story was high and cheerful. The centre of the group, Wolf Branscombe's own, was a building thirty feet high, with a central galleried dome above a cloister, running to a couple of hundred feet. Scattered around it, at uneven distances, were houses and cottages of many kinds . . . some that would suit a married couple with children, some that would suit a married couple without, some that would suit that most troublesome of guests the Bohemian bachelor. There was also a banquet-hall, a spacious ball-room, and a stately library. It was a pleasant scene. Alouette and I immensely enjoyed it. This, we agreed, was the perfection of country life. To build a huge edifice which it is a day's work to climb over, and where you never revisit your bed-chamber because it is too far to go,

is a mere mixture of idiocy and ostentation. Build yourself a pretty central place, that will house you and your wife and children and immediate attendants. Run up isolated places for your mediate servants and for your guests. Instead of your house being a huge block of building, let it rather resemble a village. That is the country-house architecture of Mars. It was originated by Michael Angelo, when he first visited that planet. It was carried to completion by our friend Hine. When Alouette and I had crossed the drawbridge, we wandered carelessly about the grounds, awaiting a chance of introduction to their owner. We had not to wait long. The black-bearded wild-eyed strong-handed old pirate turned up shortly, and fell in love with Alouette at first sight; asked us to have some lunch, and stay for a year. This is the way things are done in Mars. Staying for a year seem-

ed doubtful; but we agreed to the lunch. I will not describe it, for fear of annoying the eunuch of letters. There was [illegible] in the water.

"You must stay a day or two here," said the old Wolf, "unless you are much engaged. I expect some people you will like to see. Come across the lawn and I will show you your rooms."

We followed him across a lawn of emerald velvet, on which trees of scarlet and sapphire bloom were frequent, and came to a lovely little cottage of about four rooms, where just one servant-maiden was ready to attend on us.

"Will you stay here?" said Wolf Branscombe.

I looked at Alouette, who looked merrily at me, and answered,

"Yes."

"To-morrow," says Wolf, "we shall have

company . . . people you'll like, both of you. I'm an old fogy, a dull fellow. I'm used-up. But you'll like Raphael and Claudia. Good-bye."

Off strode the Wolf across the lawn. I turned to Alouette.

"Sweetheart," I said, "you and I are left alone. Are you afraid to be alone with me?"

"Don't you think you insult me and degrade yourself by asking such an absurd question?" she replied. "If I were afraid to be alone with you I could not deign to speak to you."

"What a stern rebuke!" I said.

"Too stern, perhaps. Too stern certainly, for I know you spoke in kindness; but men ought to learn that women know a gentleman from a scoundrel."

"I hope I am not a scoundrel altogether," I said.

"No," answered Alouette, putting her

lovely lively lips to mine. "No—you are nothing of the kind. I should be in love with you, but an instinct tells me you belong to somebody in another planet. Yet, for all that, I am willing to love you very much indeed."

Alouette began to cry. I thought before she was all laughter. Yet the women who laugh most gaily have often the freëst fount of tears. When the spherules dropt from Alouette's dear eyes, I felt almost a criminal. Why could I not dwell in Mars for ever, with Alouette for my bride? *I could not.* The thought of Earth was upon me, the return to my own native planet, the life I had lived long ago. Mars was lovely, and Alouette was lovely; but Mars was not Earth, and Alouette was not exactly a woman. She hadn't weaknesses enough . . . and Mars hadn't London enough.

However, Alouette and I slept in one of

Wolf Branscombe's cottages: and I fear the Wolf has to this day the impression that we were man and wife. Between Alouette and me, however, there was simply what is styled Platonic love. Three kinds of love exist. There is passion; the royal strong irresistible unquenchable passion which conquers all obstacles, being the divine desire and resolve of a man who has seen the only woman in the world that can satisfy him. That passion I have known; not to have known it is not to have lived. There is appetite, the erotic fancy; the liking (I cannot strictly call it *love*) which grows out of a woman's being pretty to look upon. This is merely contemptible. Thirdly, there is what has been called the Platonic affection. It deserves clearer definition, and I am not sure it does not deserve cultivation. It is the magnetism of the mind. There is no wretched wantonness about it.

This last form of sexual intercourse rests on a definite scientific basis. *There is a sex in souls.* This admitted, men and women can meet each other on intelligible terms. Why should mere physical ideas trouble and untranquillize the brain of creatures capable of such infinite capacities as ours? I take *love* as the test. What is love? Must it consist of kisses and other things of the same sort? May not love reside in one glance of the eye, in one utterance of the lip? I suppose I might love Alouette, without being sued for breach of promise of marriage.

In Mars there are Courts of Love, as there used to be in this planet of ours in the Middle Ages. The Judges are ladies. Many questions are tried by them; one of especial note is plagiary. Any poet who borrows is publicly flogged. I should like

to see the rule applied to my poor dear old native planet.

Alouette and I found Wolf Branscombe's hospitality very jolly indeed. He left us quite alone. We dined with him, that was all. We made the Platonic love I have mentioned.

"How was it made?"

"Ah!"

Now here is a song that was sung one night when Alouette and I were alone over our coffee:

"I do not wish to touch your hand,
I do not wish to kiss your lips,
I only wish to know your soul,
My darling child . . .

"All your sweet thoughts to understand,
Fair fancies that my own eclipse,
Beautiful dreams that heavenward roll,
And drive men wild.

"I want to look in those dark eyes,
And know what secret lingers there,
I want to know what magic lies
In that brown hair.

I want . . . I want what cannot be,
Though Solar Systems swerve and swing,
That you should mix your soul with me,
You sweet young thing."

It is unfortunate that the second stanza was constructed on different metric system from the first; but Alouette forgave me, as I hope the reader will do likewise. And I venture to think it would be well for the planet Earth, if there were upon it more of the class of love which I have indicated. Women were not designed to be mere physical comrades of men; they were also meant to be their intellectual and poetical associates. Look at Shakespeare's wonderful gallery of perfect portraits: Rosalind in the green-wood, Portia in a Venetian court of justice, Desdemona in her dire disaster, Ophelia driven wild by Hamlet's sad sorrow, Cordelia . . . ah, Cordelia! . . . for her there is a litany of love. Look farther back, at dear Shakespeare's

sole compeer, Homer. Hector's Andromache! Can anyone who has read the *Iliad* think of her without tears in his eyes? If so, I am sorry for him.

CHAPTER IX.

MELANTER.

Verum haec ipse equidem spatiis exclusus iniquis
Praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.
P. V. M.

All this however, barred by space unjust,
I leave for other lips to sing, when I am dead.
R. D. B.

WHEN Ἔστησε rejoined me, he brought an invitation from an acquaintance he had made, who united the two delightful occupations of poet and gardener.

"Let us go and see him," he said. "He grows the Cleopatra medlar, and a medlar named after the serpent of old Nile must be delicious."

"How should you like a Christabel nectarine?" asked Alouette.

"Εστησε laughed.

"True words," he said, "are often spoken in jest. "We will visit Melanter, and he shall lecture you on the georgics of Mars. Their development would amaze Publius V. Maro, as I believe the Americans call him."

So we visited Melanter, and were delighted with our visit; and not delighted only, but made wiser thereby. His grounds were on the border of a pleasant lake, with a laughing rivulet running through them. He entertained us poetically, with huge piles of exquisite fruit and sparkling wine, and Mars water and classic thought. He took us through acres of glass, through wide wandering paths of garden.

"We are fortunate here in Mars," he said. "I first tried gardening by the Thames

—here it is preferable. Come no east winds, no hail-storms, and no blights. Besides, our fruits and flowers are transfigurations. Look at that rose."

It was a soft white flower, with a ruddy blush in the very heart of it, and its fragrance was mysteriously delicious.

"That," said Melanter, "is the Juliet rose; when our dear Shakespeare created the fair Capulet, those roses began to bloom in Mars. You see love blushing in a maiden heart. By the way, do you like mulberries?"

I instantly confessed a great liking for that fruit.

"Look at these," said Melanter.

Wonderful juicy berries were they, full of flavour, vast in size, looking a lovely red amid the dim green leaves.

"That," quoth Melanter, "is the Rosalind mulberry. Its arrival in Mars was coincident with '*As You Like It.*'"

While we were thus conversing in this enchanted garden, there suddenly broke forth a strain of song:

"I have been far through realms of air;
I have known agony, anguish, regret;
I have returned to a vision fair,
My sweet pet.
'Come to me, child with the golden hair?
O, not yet?'

'No, not yet.' Well, what fears she?
Kiss of lip that never has lied?
She would be wiser to come to me,
Sweetheart and bride.
Ah, her 'not yet' has set me free—
Then love died."

"That's a pet parrot of mine," said Melanter. "I give him plenty of modern poetry to read, and he imitates it capitally. I fancy he has lately been studying Heinrich Heine. He is not very brilliant to-day; for I don't think they put any brandy on his matutinal lump of sugar."

He was certainly a splendid bird. His pre-

valent colour was olive green, but here and there were frills and fringes of the richest scarlet—such scarlet as one sees in the passionate heart of a July rose, or in the supreme moment of a July sunset.

"Sing again," said Melanter; and the bird obeyed.

"'Sing again, my master says:'
The bird obeys...
Sings of the beautiful bright rose-bloom,
Sings of the heavy leafage-gloom,
Sings of whispers in lime-walks heard,
Must not echo a single word—
Being a bird.

"Ah, if she wore, instead of wings,
Other things!
Then beneath limes she would shyly trip,
Then the beak would turn to a lip,
Then she'd plumage of silk unfurl,
Then she'd cause male brains to whirl,
Being a girl."

"Curiously clever specimen of the Psittacus tribe," said *Ἔστησε* to Melanter. "Nobody is surprised at anything in this planet,

but on Earth that parrot would make a man's fortune."

"My fortune," replied Melanter, "is made. I can grow grapes and write verse. What more do I want?"

"Nothing," was the answer. "The man who can take his wine in pills and relish versing has nothing the matter with his physical or psychical health. When I was in that other planet I regret to say that I exchanged verse for prose and wine for opium. I am wiser now. I like the water of Mars."

"It is the most marvellous fluid in the Solar System," said I.

Amid the odours of Juliet roses and Christabel lilies, with Rosalind mulberries and Beatrice nectarines and Cleopatra medlars and sweet Anne Page strawberries to furnish our out-of-door dessert, we talked of other peculiarities of this planet Mars.

"Have you heard of the Hermits?" asked Melanter.

We had not.

"O, then, *I must* take you to see them. Let us go over to-morrow. You will see some of your oldest acquaintances . . . but I won't tell you beforehand."

Next morning, after a somewhat late night in the divine alleys and lawns of Melanter's garden—a garden as exquisite as that of King Alcinoüs—we started to the Hermitage. It lay higher up the beautiful river where whose waters laved Melanter's garden. We went in a sailing boat of single sail, our friend steering. As we traversed the water the lake grew wider, the trees more sublime in their aspect; especially we noted giant growths of the Æsculus, their boughs descending to the virgin turf, their lamp-like pyramidal blooms of many colours unknown to our planet. As our lazy sail glided on-

ward, *Εστησε* all the while talking as he was wont to talk by other lakes almost as beautiful upon another orb, the mere grew narrower gradually, and the trees seemed to grow grander in size, and we were almost in darkness beneath them, but for the radiant sparkle of the water, every atom of which resembled a crushed gem. Then we entered a granite gorge, not much wider than a Thames lock. At the end of this there was a pier; to this Melanter moored his boat, and we landed. On a wide lawn, dotted at intervals with those vast specimens of the Æsculus whose summits reached a high region of air, there stood a circular building crowned with a lofty dome. We approached it in silence; wide open stood the doors, and the interior, all of white marble, revealed to us a lovely circle of statues. There were seats also of marble two-thirds round

the edifice; and a raised platform faced them.

"This is the Theatre," said Melanter.

"When used, and for what?" asked Ἔστησε.

"It is designed for the recital of the highest poetry, and nothing but the highest. The Hermits are the judges. If they allow unanimously—for there must not be one dissentient voice—that any epic or drama or lyric is of the highest class, the king comes to hear its author recite it."

"When was the last recital?" I asked.

"I can find no record of one for a thousand years," said Melanter.

"I doubt if there has been one since the Theatre was built," said Ἔστησε.

CHAPTER X.

THE HERMITS.

Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Asked, when in hell, to see the royal jail;
Approved their method in all other things—
"But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?"
"There," said his guide, "the group is full in view."
"Indeed!" replied the Don, "there are but few."
His black interpreter the charge disdained:
"Few, fellow!—there are all that ever reigned!"

COWPER.

AROUND the theatre, at equal distances across the lawn, we saw a series of charming dwellings embroidered in trees.

"Pleasant retreats," said Ἔστησε. "Are those the hermitages? If so, I could find it in my heart to turn anchorite. How

many of them are there, and who occupy them?"

"They are but seven in number, and they are designed for all the great poets Earth has ever, or shall ever, produce.

"A small number!" I exclaimed, marvelling.

"I doubt if those hermitages will ever be equitably filled," said *Ἑστησε*. "Let us survey their portals. Are there any poets at home, I wonder? It would be strange. They are generally out on wild expeditions."

We walked round the beautiful lawn. On the garden-gate of the first hermitage we saw in golden letters the name *Homer*. There seemed no movement in the house, but a tall maiden, that looked a princess, was tending the birds and flowers.

"Homer is away with Circe or Calypso," said *Ἑστησε*, "and has left Nausicaa to take care of his hermitage."

In Shakespeare's retreat we saw Rosalind teaching a nightingale to sing *Concolinel.* What other names we saw on other gateways may be left to imagination; only, strange to say, there was not a hermit at home; they were all off on aërial voyages, as *Ἔστησε* had predicted.

But on the seventh portal there was, to our amazement, no name.

"Ah!" said *Ἔστησε*, "who is the lost Pleiad of this galaxy? Let us enter and explore." He pushed the gate as if he knew the trick of it. Beautiful exceedingly were the flowers which bloomed in this secluded garden. The moment we entered we were in complete seclusion, and amid a fragrance wholly indescribable. Fountains flashed in the air, birds sang even stranger songs than Melanter's parrot. The hall door stood wide open. In a pleasant book-room, containing behind glittering glass the

choicest of Earth's classics, there was on the table a choice collation of fruit, that tempted the taste.

We all sat down with alacrity, not unwilling to rest in this quiet hermitage. Alouette was soon eating a nectarine as fair and fragrant as herself. I took a mighty draught of Mars water.

"Do you like this?" asked Ἑστησε of Melanter.

"I do indeed."

"Then often come to see me. I love to talk with mariners like you. I am going to stay."

"To stay!" we both exclaimed; but Alouette seemed in no degree surprised, knowing, doubtless, the customs of Mars.

"Yes," he said, "I will be the seventh hermit. I am the lost Pleiad. The King of Mars designed this for me, I know by inevitable instinct. He does things royally,

you see. You must all consider yourselves my guests."

We remained in the hermitage some days, during which *Εστησε* became marvellously poetic. We explored the other hermitages, but did not meet any of their chief inhabitants, who seemed all away on business, or pleasure, or both. But the place was populous with their dependents and retainers; and we met Nestor and Polonius, talking in the wise strain of ancient experience; and caught Troïlus and Don Juan exchanging amorous anecdotes. At eventide there would be songs and dances on the green, pleasant lyrics of love and spring, stately minuets, in which Byron and Mercutio almost crossed rapiers who should lead out Helen of Troy. It was a gay hermitage in the absence of all the hermits but one; and he, too, was not devoid of gaiety, for he had an idea in that marvellous head of his which he one after-

noon unfolded to me under the shadow of a great plane-tree, while Alouette and Melanter were playing chess in a cool nook of honeysuckle just across the lawn.

"Should a hermit live alone, do you think?" he asked.

"It does not seem the custom in *this* hermitage," I answered.

"It is neither customary nor pleasant," he said. "Well, you will be returning to our old friend's planet soon. You will live a second life far happier than your first. You will remember me in my hermitage with Alouette."

"With Alouette!" I said.

"Yes," he replied. "I know your Platonic love for her. But she is mine. I created her. She is my Genevieve.

> **'I calmed her fears, and she was calm,**
> **And told her love with virgin pride;**
> **And so I won my Genevieve,**
> **My bright and beauteous bride.'"**

There was no appeal against this. It was unanswerable. As I gazed on this wild Alouette, she grew more and more in my vision to resemble the lady who

> ". . . . leaned against the armed man,
> The statue of the armed knight;
> Who stood and listened to his lay
> Amid the lingering light."

She had just beaten Melanter at the Muzio gambet, and stood up triumphant against a handsome sapling oak. As the pyrogen-laden air streamed through her tresses, it was more than a substitute for *"Εστησε* vision of moonlight long ago. She, with instinctive knowledge of what was happening, tripped across the lawn, and threw herself into his outstretching arms. Melanter looked on with a humorous smile.

"I acquiesce," I said.

"You are wise," said *"Εστησε*, in his tone of the oracle. "Yet acquiesce not always.

In this orb we recognise things opposite: learn to resist, yet acquiesce; learn to know society, yet isolate yourself. Farewell."

They walked toward the hermitage, Alouette flinging me a Parthian glance—half her own fun, and half the pathos of Genevieve. I have not seen them since.

"Will you drop down the lake with me?" asked Melanter.

"I think not," I said; "if you will forgive me."

"I not only forgive, I approve," he replied. "*Never go back, never think twice,* are the two main maxims of Mars. I have been breaking them ever since I came, which is why I am here so long."

"I think from my short experience I can add a third," was my answer. "*Be alone.* Good-bye."

He went down to the pier, where lay his boat; I started through the her-

mitage in exactly the opposite direction.

As I passed on, almost savagely, looking neither right nor left, just as if I had been an adventurer in Africa, determined to find Prester John or die, I pondered much within myself the phantasmagoria through which I was passing? Was it a dream?—was not my past life, rather, a dream? Had I ever killed my best friend—lost my only love—lived the life of a recluse? Was it all a vague vision of the past—from Ellesmere to Five Tree Hill—from Lucy, amid her roses and nightingales by the Thames, to Lucy dead on her knees by my death-bed? Was Earth itself a dream? Could I return thither, or was there no such star wandering through the grey-blue ether?

I came to no conclusion. I walked on, stolidly, defiantly. I thought of the triad worked out by Melanter and myself:

"Never go back;
Never think twice;
Be alone."

These things will I do in Mars, methought, for they seem to suit this planet; but, if there be an Earth, and I return thither, utterly I abjure them. The Prodigal Son went back; the Creator of mankind thought twice; the sons of Adam have never found it good to be alone. No: I will walk through this land of dreams, and read it backward.

While thus thinking, I had noted nothing of the road I took. All at once there came a prattle of voices, and on the velvet grass of what seemed a common I saw groups of children playing all manner of games, and laughing gaily in the sunshine. It was as if an immense child's school had broken loose for a holiday. There were boys at leap-frog and rounders; there were girls dancing

and playing *les graces*, and running after hoops; there was battledore and shuttle-cock in profusion, and the white-feathered toys made bird-like flight in the air. Little boys were on their knees, intent upon marbles; little girls were as intently nursing dolls. Not a creature under the grave trees that looked tenderly on their sport seemed above eight years old. There were mere babies among them—but no visible nurses.

The scene was so pleasant that I had not thought of myself or my late meditations. Presently a brown-haired girl perceived me, and ran to where I stood, exclaiming,

"Little boy, come and play!"

CHAPTER XI.

CHILD-LAND.

Out upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together.

SUCKLING.

She has eyes as blue as damsons,
She has pounds of auburn curls,
She regrets the game of leap-frog
Is prohibited to girls.

BROUGH.

"LITTLE boy, come and play!"

I looked at myself. Why, I *was* a little boy, and a very little one—not above three, I should think. I was changed without knowing it. I was in a low frock, with bare legs. I was not only amazed, but

disgusted. I looked sulkily at this persecutor, who now appeared to me a giantess, and put my finger in my mouth, and began to cry. She, the wretch! an old woman of eight, only laughed and said,

"Come along, or I shall smack you!" at the same time applying her little rosy hand to my bare shoulders.

Well, as she dragged me along so fast that I had no time to think, and as resistance was impossible, in a few seconds I found myself rolling on the grass, amid a heap of babies of my own apparent age. Somehow, we soon made friends. My memory of the past faded before the intense instinct of the moment. We played in our own helpless way, and made each other understand without articulation. As I found myself in this primitive condition, yet with thoughts of the the past on my mind, in vague and transient form, I wondered whether the ordinary

baby of Earth, looking so confoundedly meditative and wise, is thinking of a world he has lately left.

Early in the afternoon we were brought in to a supper of the baby sort by a host of nurses, and kindly washed, and deposited in cribs in one great dormitory. Tired with rolling on the grass, I fell asleep at once. I awoke next day a year older . . . this being the law in the Child Land of Mars. It is a law which applies only to strange visitors; and the brown-haired hoyden who had hauled me into the midst of the place was an actual daughter of Mars, and grew older only by days. Hence in three days I was old enough quite to fall in love with Miss Hoyden, who by this time was only two years my senior. She was the wildest little romp in the world, but she didn't mind making love in the most pathetic manner. I kissed her many times a day, and we swore

eternal fidelity to each other. On the second day of our engagement, when I had reached the nature age of seven, we were married by a group of our playfellows, under an old willow archway, that made a beautiful church. We had two parsons; and a father to give her away; and a groomsman for me; and a troop of twelve little bridesmaids all in white, which indeed was the prevalent colour in Child Land. Then came a wedding breakfast on the grass, consisting chiefly of lollipops and blackberries, with gingerbeer for drinking healths. It was a long business altogether; and just before the final speech was made we departed for our honeynoon, in quite an ignominious manner. For the gong sounded, and out trooped the nurses, and my bride and I were washed and put into crib beds very far apart. However, you see I had two days happiness with her; and she made a desperate vow to

grow up for my sake only, which I hope she broke at least a dozen years ago. We were, I think, as affectionate a couple as I remember during the period of our married life —though I was a child of Earth and she of Mars—though I grew a year a day, and she didn't—though we were compelled, like people of fashion, to keep separate apartments. Alas, I fear she has forgotten me.

I went to bed as usual, on the evening of what I must call my eighth year, after my usual affectionate parting with my bride, who was eating a huge sugar-plum I had given her, and who certainly seemed to like me better the bigger I grew. I was a troublesome child that night after our parting, and kicked considerably under the infliction of the bath, since my dignity as a married man commenced to dawn upon me. The nurse avenged herself by poking soap into my mouth and eyes, and giving cor-

rective taps to various parts of my small person. Altogether I found myself in my little white bed in a vile temper, with a taste of soap in my mouth, and a smarting sensation, that I felt would render it uncomfortable to sit down next day, and an heroic determination, when I grew up, to organize a revolution—have all nursemaids whipped to death, and abolish washing for ever. Conscious somehow that I was growing a year a day, I felt I should be a man in a fortnight; that a few weeks would convey me to remote and worn-out regions of antiquity, did not occur to the buoyant infant.

There I lay, like the young Hercules in his cradle strangling serpents. I could not sleep. My thoughts were too vivid, my smarts too severe. I meditated on the coming revolution. Although no light burnt in the vast dormitory, there was

diffused through wide windows the inextinguishable light of the Mars air. I looked at the long line of beds with pitying contempt on their sleepy inmates—it did not occur to me that they had no sensitive reasons for staying awake.

Suddenly I felt heroic resolve. The little girls slept on the other side of the great dormitory—why should I not cross it, and seek my bride, so ruthlessly severed from me? You see, growing a year a day, I was older every hour. The detested nurses slept elsewhere. I would try it.

I got out of bed, and walked to the other side—about fifty feet, I should judge. With all my heroism, I was in a frightful funk. If one of those horrid nurses should happen to awake, what might I not expect? Once or twice I thought of turning back, but I did not.

Arrived there, I was puzzled. How

should I find the bed of her whom I wanted? If I pinched the toes of the likeliest-looking little girls, there would be a commotion. What was I to do? I walked along the line, and at last was rewarded by seeing somebody sitting up in bed, and staring at me. There was much fuzzy hair, that no night-cap could restrain.

It was she!

"O," she said, "I can't sleep, for the soap in my eyes, and——"

But before she could finish a sentence which seemed to promise terrible revelations, I found myself caught up bodily and replaced in my bed, with stern admonition to go to sleep, and one or two additional reasons for staying awake.

Childhood's woes soon heal; childhood's slumber is not long delayed. I slept.

When I awoke I was a child no more—in my natural form I lay beneath the

shadow of a great lime-tree, in the midst of a meadow that looked like a prairie.

I was not surprised. That feeling had long perished in my mind. I was sorry for my little child-wife, whom I knew I should never see again, for I had firmly resolved not to turn back—and who, by turning back, can revisit Child-Land?

Then, lying on the turf, short and sweet as if it grew on the side of some inaccessible fell, I wondered why I had been a child for six days. Had I anything to learn thereby, negative or positive? It was something, certes, to have felt a child again; to have been petted, patted, soothed, scolded; to have played with children, enjoyed their dainties, lived on bread and milk, been put to bed by daylight. I was not dissatisfied with my little adventure.

As I thus meditated, I heard music—the sound, apparently, of a single flute, played

most deliciously to a simple air of gaiety. I sprang to my feet. I could not see whence came the sound, but followed it as if it magnetized me. Crossing from the great meadow through an archway, I entered a long avenue of trees, cut into rounded forms by the most careful of pruning. They sprang from the greenest grass; the wide path was the very poetry of gravel.

"Never turn back," thought I, and strode on to the château which ended this superb vista.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHATEAU VENUS.

Se trouvent trois lettres en vin
  Qui sont vigueur, ioie, nourriture,
  Et denotent bien sa nature . . .
Ainsi que le dit mon voisin.

OLIVIER BASSELIN.

How could it be a dream? Yet there
She stood, the moveless image fair—
The little-noticed oft-seen thing,
With hand fast closed upon his ring.

MORRIS.

LOOK at Meissonier's illustration to *Le Malentendu*, at p. 233 of *Les Contes Rémois*, by the Count de Chavasse, and you may at once imagine the sort of place at which I had arrived. Up the long avenue

I loitered, while the sweet suggestive magnetic music grew nearer, yet hardly louder. It was music indescribable; it was like unto that whereby the Piper of Hamelin, mentioned in legend of the Middle Ages, could make both rats and children follow him. There is in music something which the highest masters of music have as yet found unfathomable. They may make their "songs without words," but they cannot bind a definite meaning to those songs. The melody which to Romeo seems all love shall to Mercutio seem all laughter and to Tybalt all rapier. Poetry, which in its supreme form *contains* music, is to some degree thus receivable; but of music it may fairly be said that probably the idea in its composer's brain is never identical with any one of the myriad ideas which it kindles in other brains, and of which no two coincide. The metaphysic of music has never yet been

thoroughly investigated, and I have no time to do it as I walk up the green alley beneath arched boughs which leads to the Château Venus.

Thus was this stately yet riant building called. I entered upon a wide terrace, radiant with flowers, and graced with fair forms of marble. The music came from the terrace just above, reached by three or four marble steps. Ascending, I saw a fountain leaping in the sunshine, and washing chiselled groups of Naiads, with Hylas hidden among them; and on the balustrade of its basin leaned the musician, a fair long-ringleted youth, in costume of no special age . . . all brocade and silk, feather and lace, with the pinkest hose from knee to foot, and the brightest of diamonds for shoe-buckles. As he played on a quaint pipe or flageolet, all his notes dropt like words into my ear. The liquid syllables seemed to say:

"Sweet, ah, sweet
To throw the hours away.
Tinkle, music! twinkle, feet!
Let each pulse of wild joy beat!
It is our own, this day.

"No, ah, no!
Grasp we the minutes tight!
Rhyme, be silent! Time, be slow!
Blush to rose, fair breast of snow!
It is our own, this night."

And what the liquid syllables of the music said seemed likewise to sing the liquid spherules of the fountain, which threw streams of radiant water on the white shoulders and bosoms of the naughty nymphs who were hiding Hylas. Across the terrace, half-way to the Château's beautiful vine-festooned portal, I now noted that the supreme sculptor had placed a statue of Herakles himself, searching for the lost boy, with club and lion's hide, so gigantic that it almost dwarfed the fountain.

Gay groups, in fantastic dress, were scat-

tered over terraces and gardens. Dances, and games, and flirtations were in high progress. When the Troubadour of the fountain beheld me he stopped his piping, and stepped forward, with either reverence or its mockery, and said, "Monseigneur le Prince de la Terre, deign to enter the Château of Monsieur le Duc de l'Amour."

At this instant came forward the Duke himself, a superb and sprightly but somewhat soft presence, with ladies and pages and a marvellous grouping of soldiers around. As I looked from one side to the other of this fair frolic fantastic scene, what fascinated me most was, not the Duke's brilliant beauty of youth, nor any of the marvellous loveliness of the demoiselles around him, nor the general contour and effect of the Château, and its delicious garden, but the angry face of the colossal Herakles, and the grip his huge right hand held of a club as vast as

Owen Glendower's oak. But, being recognized as Prince de la Terre—a lofty title,—and being surrounded by creatures that sparkled and welcomed and smiled, I did my best to be courteous. I succeeded. The time had arrived for a banquet—it always was time for a banquet—at the Château Venus. This was a superb festivity. It was served in the Hall Anadyomene, so called because great pictures of the Love-goddess rising from the sea ran round all four sides of it, and culminated in the domed ceiling. Pity Thornhill could not have seen them, ere he painted so many Dutch Venuses and Cupids with water on the brain.

"Prince," said the Duc de l'Amour, "it is the custom for all strangers who honour us by their presence to narrate the history of their adventures. It need not be now—stay till you have been here a week or a century—but we beseech you, the most il-

lustrious visitor we have lately received, to gladden us with your romance, which must be full of delight. Then when you leave, I will ask you to choose and take with you the rarest rapier in our armoury, the swiftest steed in our stable, the loveliest lady in our suite."

As thus the Duke spake, there was a joyous burst of applause, and the Troubadour, guitar in hand, broke forth thus:

"Sword! let thy temper be
Such as shall make foes wince!
He can well use thee,
Being a Prince.

"Steed, let thy courage be
That of thy sires long since!
He can well stride thee,
Being a Prince.

"Lady! thy smile I see:
Ay, and thy doom I guess.
He can well love thee.
Be a Princess."

"My minstrel grows humorous," said the Duke. "But disregarding that chartered

libertine's nonsense-rhymes, will you tell us your story?"

"I have two stories."

"One true and one false?" asked a laughing lady who sat by my side, and had been doing her worst to make me eat all the fruit within reach.

"Both true," I said.

"*Both?*" said the Duke.

"Did you ever hear the story of the man without the shadow?" I asked.

"No," cried a dozen voices in my neighbourhood; "tell it, please."

"It is brief enough," I said. "A man who wanted money, sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for his shadow."

"The Devil!" said the Duke de l'Amour. "Who is this Devil that buys souls?"

"Ah!" cried my sprightly neighbour, the Marquise de la Folie, "and what are souls?"

I felt strongly disposed to swear. Here had I merely designed to illustrate my duplex position by reference to this old German legend, and I encountered this benighted ignorance. That the Marquise knew nothing about the soul was conceivable; but that the Duke had no acquaintance with the Devil! This was too much. I could not lecture this gay and gallant company on comparative mythology. O how I wished Max Müller there!—or should have wished, only I did not hear of him till afterwards. I fear my length of pause was almost impolite.

"Monsieur," I said, "I am glad you know nothing of the Devil; he is not worth explaining to you. I can quite understand his being unknown in Mars, as the wind never blows from the east in this planet."

"But you have not told me about souls," said the loquacious little Marquise. "Have

they anything to do with the east wind too?"

"I think they may have," I made reply. "They are uncomfortable things to have about you. They ask awkward questions—whether you have laughed too much, drunk too much, made love too much, kissed the wrong man——"

I was interrupted.

"Prince," said a lady on the other side, the Comtesse Dudu, "you can do nothing too much if you like it, and to kiss the wrong man is impossible. Therefore, I think that to have a soul must be extremely inconvenient."

Everyone fully assented to this, and I, not wishing to make myself ridiculous, drank a goblet of wine in the Countess's honour.

"But the story, Prince," said the Duke, presently; "or the two stories. Come."

"I was going to describe myself as a man

with two shadows. Now, shall I tell you one or both, or shall I invent a romance that is neither one nor the other?"

The lights were blazing in the Hall Anadyomene by this time, though we had taken our seats long before sunset. The festival was growing almost too rapid in movement. Luckily for the earthy brain of the Prince de la Terre, there was plenty of Mars water at hand, and I drank quarts of that restorative fluid. O for a flask of it now!

"A romance!" cried the Troubadour, who sat near. "The Prince may give us as many true stories as he likes afterwards."

"The ladies had better vote," said the Duke, with a laugh.

Unanimously did those gay creatures prefer fiction to truth. I scarce know what made me rejoice thereat, or why my thoughts were fixed on that stern statue of Herakles, which stood in front of the portal

of the Château Venus. But I began to invent, to recount:

"Long ago, in my boyhood, I was deemed beautiful—ladies, please not to laugh! Age and much travel cause great differences; and, if I am a Prince, I have the satisfaction of being a very ugly one."

At this point I received the rapturous applause of the assemblage.

"When I was a mere child, there was a long voyage to be undertaken for some purpose I never quite understood; but all the princes of our country were going, and I desired to go, for the pleasure of change. As no danger was apprehended, my father allowed this, putting me under the charge of a cousin, who was considered the strongest man and bravest soldier of that time: we might not think so much of him now.

"We sailed many leagues over the violet sea. We saw strange sights. The beautiful

children of the deep came to the surface to gaze upon us. After numerous days, coming to an island covered with trees, we anchored in a sweetly silent bay, and boats went ashore for fresh water. My cousin let me come in his boat. He did the work of a dozen other men. He pulled through the tide like lightning, was first ashore, and while he filled his casks I wandered.

"Up a narrow wood-path, covered with anemone and cyclamen, I went loitering. A soft breath was on my cheek. My name was whispered sweetly in front of me. On I went: the path wound: I thought nothing of return. At length I reached a deep clear pool, and, being warm, thought I would bathe. When ready to dive, it seemed as if I could see the forms of nymphs beneath the water. Still I sprang. I never rose to the surface. Nymphs there

were, hundreds of them; and they held me below; and though for long days I could hear my cousin's mighty voice shouting my name through the woods of the island, I was unable to extricate myself, and he went away in terrible grief."

Here I paused.

"What next?" said the gay Marquise. "You are not under water among nymphs now. You are above water in the Château Venus. How did you get away? To how many nymphs did you make love? Are nymphs at all like women, or are they chillier, living in ponds instead of boudoirs, and eating frogs instead of Strasbourg pies? Ah, and besides, what became of your cousin? He is a grand figure, that water-carrying giant, who grew hoarse in crying your name along the shores of the island."

"Madame," laughed the Duke, "how

many questions you ask in a breath! Which shall Monsieur answer first?"

"The cousin first," she said in silver syllables.

"*The cousin first!*" cried a strange harsh echo at the outer end of the Hall Anadyomene. Rising, I saw a gaunt man in a red headdress, without a coat, carrying a pike, and apparently leading others of the same kind.

CHAPTER XIII.

ROUGE GAGNE.

"Ex pede Herculem."

THAT Herakles . . . that sheer strength of the world . . . falsifies the saying here quoted. Politicans are too apt to judge the demiurgic demi-god by his foot only. Twelve labours wrought he, and he wrought them well. The myth of the past is the prophecy of the future. When the glorious son of Zeus and Alkmene, the god that was also man, went through those twelve labours of his, it was not without significance. When he slew the lion of Nemea, he slew

tyranny. When he killed the nine-headed Hydra of Lerna, he put an end to the Cabinet Ministers. Say not there were no such animals in days of Herakles: closets and cabinets were early institutions, and the idea of government in a corner came at once when kings grew too weak to govern for themselves in the broad light of day. Corner cupboard politics were not invented by the modern Whigs. When Herakles put an end to the stag at Arcady, and the boar of Erymanthus, it is clear that he was assumed to be dealing with minor rascals: while nothing could be more intelligible than his cleansing the stables of Augeas (monarch of red tape), and his destruction of the birds of Stymphalus, the government clerks of the period. Poseidon's bull can clearly prefigurate nothing save John Bull's fleet, which the Herakles of England will rescue from idiotic

management. Whether Diomed's mares may mean cynical literature, or Hippolyte's girdle the decadence of chastity, or the oxen of the Red Island the advance in the price of beef, I know not. The old myths should be read leisurely, curiously, carefully. As to the Hesperides, we all know what that must mean : our Herakles, master of might, will show the children of beauty who have remained for so long a time in their cherisht gardens of delight, that he, half god half man, is greater than they. Shall it be? Shall the brain of the common folk awake amid the first race of the world. Will the daughters of Hesperis receive the unconquerable son of Alkmene? And if so, will he drag from the mysterious gate the three-headed dog of hell?

The gay and gallant chevaliers of the Château Venus fought nobly that night. They were overpowered by multitude.

The innumerable republican came to the front, and his bludgeon was [illegible] the rapier of the gentleman. The story is old—the collision is inevitable. The Château Venus disappeared before the giant force attacking it.

And I? Well, I did not meddle with the quarrel. I might perchance have done so had there been a lady in the case; but I had not been long enough in the Château Venus to fall desperately in love. So, when there was a general scrimmage and rapier and bludgeon came face to face, I proceeded on my adventures. Mars was not *my* planet: why should I trouble myself about its politics?

Wherefore, escaping quietly from the Château, onward I went. It was a delicious night, and its coolness gave me pleasure indescribable. The breath of a summer midnight is second only to the

breath of the woman you love. It seems as if all sweetness of stars and flowers, all fragrance of mysterious waters mirroring the moon, were condensed into that midnight breath. It is the odour of the goddess of Earth. It is the kiss of Demeter, our immortal mother, whose lips are as loving and whose breasts as full of milk as when Adam and Eve were babies.

Leaving rouge and noir to fight it out at the Château Venus, I went on my journey. Early as it was in the morning, I found a companion. He was an elderly gentleman, with a broad forehead and dust-coloured spectacles. He was leaning over a five-barred gate when I first encountered him, apparently awaiting the sunrise. His first remark was brief:

"Eggs!"

I pulled up and surveyed him. He did not look a maniac. I had reverent reminis-

cences of my grandmother. I gave the old gentleman an encouraging smile.

"Ha!" he cried—"have I found a disciple? Is there a man capable of understanding that egg is epigram? Look at a series of eggs, from a wren to an ostrich's. Can life be packed into shapes more beautiful? They are existence in essence. Look at this, sir," he took an egg from his pocket—"that's a nightingale. That's music. Here's another. That's a jackdaw. That's fun. By-the-way," he exclaimed, going off at a tangent, "do you like spiders? I'm awfully fond of spiders!—they are such mathematical animals! Here's one—ah! come along, old boy!—he's generally got a cobweb in my hat!"

He took off his hat, and there was a very comfortable spider upon it.

"I believe I have taught that fellow to improve his webs," said my eccentric

acquaintance. "I am told that on the planet Earth there is an island called England, which contains a school styled Cambridge, which every year produces a great mathematician, described as a Senior Wrangler. I think if I could get to that planet, my spider would be a Senior Wrangler!"

"Very likely," I remarked, remembering how fond the Marquis de la Place was of spiders. By the way, Mr. Darwin ought to take this matter into serious consideration. The greatest neoteric mathematician had a mania for devouring the most mathematical of insects.

"Now where are you going?" asked my new comrade. "Have you any particular project?"

"None in the world," I answered. "I am a traveller, without design or destiny. I

am quite willing to encounter whatsoever happens."

"Very good," he said. "I am carefully examining the strange animals that inhabit this planet, intending by-and-by to write a very full and complete treatise on the zoology of the Solar System. It is rather curious that, so far as I have investigated the question, the fauna and flora of the various planets differ very widely. I have not yet come to Earth in the course of my tour; when I do there will be many novelties, as I am informed. But I never take hearsay evidence. I have resolved to describe no animal that I have not actually seen. It takes some time, but I like good honest work."

"You must have been for a long time engaged in this pursuit," I said.

"About three thousand years," he replied. "It does not seem long. Look here. I see a bird or a butterfly. I watch it all day

long. I discover its habits. Often I succeed in taming it; there are many wild creatures of the element that come to me as readily as if I were one of themselves. This is because I reason as little as possible, and rely mainly on my instincts."

"You think we have instincts?" I said, inquiringly.

"Think? I know it. Reason is a capital thing. Reason teaches you, after a few interviews with the birchrod, that the side of a regular hexagon inscribed in a circle is equal to the radius of that circle. A bee makes the hexagon without mathematical guidance . . . and makes honey as well. Instinct beats reason there, at any rate. Ha, ha! I should like to see any mathematical biped who could make honey."

My new acquantance and I moved forward together. We were in a lonely part of the country. It seemed almost virgin

turf. The birds and insects and flowers were new to me. There were strange resemblances between them. Birds which looked like roses on the wing; flowers that looked like birds at rest. My friend the naturalist was in a state of high delight.

"This is a wonderful planet," he exclaimed. "It beats all the rest that I have tried. I have serious thoughts of remaining here for the rest of my existence. Change is charming; but one gets tired in time, and I think there is enough material here for the investigation of a life-time."

Thus spake the ancient enthusiast. He rather bored me. It has been my fault, in all planets, to be somewhat easily bored. I said,

"If you are not tired of birds and bees, I am. I like men and women. Good morning."

And rudely I strode away at a great pace,

determined to escape from this man of science. Hang science! Useful in its results, it is confoundedly unpleasant in its elements. One gets very weary of the anatomy of life.

Evenglome fell upon lake and hill. It was a lovely day. I was alone amid a silent glen, where there seemed absolute and perfect solitude. Not a sound reached me on the soft south wind. I had been ascending for some time a slow and gradual slope, treading grass that was cool to the foot, inhaling fragrance of flowers more delicious than jessamine, stephanotis, cyclamen, hyacinth. Every foostep crushes these lovely blooms, made brilliant by the pyrogen of Mars.

At the head of that glade was One Tree. That was the noblest tree I ever saw. It belonged, I should say, to the oak tribe, but its leaves were larger than even those of the Canadian scarlet oak. Its height, I should think, was about a thousand feet.

Its girth, I measured, stretching my arms: it took me about fifty such stretches, each of which may be roughly put at between six and seven feet.

This glorious tree would have more completely fascinated me in its solitary beauty but for the splendour of its situation. It stood at the very top of the hill. A steep gorge ran down toward a dark dim lake below. Great cliffs surrounded this mysterious mere. I sat in the shadow of this stupendous tree, and gazed down upon the dark basin of granite. There was no sound, no movement, till suddenly an eagle, whose nest was evidently high in the branches of the great tree, swam out into the clear air, hovered a moment high above the dark yet lucid lake, and then dropt sheer into the water, picking up a huge fish, which he bore off to his eyry.

The way down to the lake, over the

greenest imaginable turf, was as steep as the side of a Westmorland fell. I could not for a long time decide whether it was worth while to descend that slope. Something in my mental instinct seemed to say "Go!" and at last I obeyed the impulse, and went down. It was hard work, for the steep hill was scarce practicable, save for a mountaineer; but I dug my heels into the grass, and got safely to the bottom. When I arrived there, I found a level lawn around the lake's margin, white with mushrooms. I am curiously fond of mushrooms. So I sat on the grass, and made a delicious supper. Nothing like the fresh mushroom of the hills and downs and fells. It made me think of Earth again.

So, moreover, did another incident. I thought I would have a swim in the cool water of this mysterious solitary lake.

When I got out a few hundred yards, I beheld something swimming toward me. To get a sight of what it was, I trod water. It was a big dog. He soon overtook me, though I am a swift swimmer, on my way ashore; and when I talked to him, he clearly made up his mind to adopt me as a master. He looked at me with friendly, intelligent eyes. Next to a woman's eyes, there are no eyes like a dog's.

I dried myself in the warm Mars air, and dressed amid the flowers of cyclamen that fringed the lake. My new friend looked at me in friendly fashion. He had manifestly made up his mind that I was responsible for his future welfare. I did not in the least degree object. The men and women of this planet soon gave up their friendship: it occurred to me the dogs might be more trustworthy. So, sitting by the margin of

the mere, I had a quiet colloquy with Big Dog.

"Where shall we sleep to-night?" I said to myself and him.

CHAPTER XIV.

PHANTASMAGORIA.

ASTROLOGOS. I have seen men and women, hats and petticoats;
I have seen boys that lived upon pure intellect;
I have seen girls that lived on simple impudence;
Dogs are, I think, superior to humanity.
ALOUETTE. They don't talk nonsense and conceive it sense, papa.

The Comedy of Dreams.

WHERE to sleep? It was a question that never need worry one in Mars. The veriest pauper cannot starve with pyrogen in both air and water, with fruit and flowers that are full of sustenance. At the same time, it is rather pleasant to get into quiet quarters, and this was my idea on the present occasion. My canine friend seemed

quite to comprehend what I wanted. He went along the side of the lake at a canter, with tail erect, turning round at intervals to invite me forward, and assure me that I should not regret following his lead. Always a believer in dogs, I took him at his word, and was in no degree surprised when I found myself at the door of a thorough tavern snuggery, which bore the name of The Hut, and was niched into the granite wall around this marvellous lake—this wilder Wastwater of Mars.

Big Dog and I walked up to the door. The innkeeper grinned at us as if he loved us, and suggested lake trout for supper. There must, I suppose, be an Ireland in Mars, for this man was as decided an Irishman as if he had kissed the Blarney stone. And, ochone! his wife and his daughter! Now his wife couldn't be more than thirty: and his daughter was about fifteen: a strap-

ping creature for the age; and, good faith, they were like two sisters.

I had my lake trout for supper, and after it a rump steak, with oyster sauce. I have, I think, already mentioned that Mars oysters invariably contain pearls, but I forget whether I remarked that oysters are *always* in season in that planet. Such is the case, and it is one reason why I like it.

The Hut was very snug. Mike, the landlord, was evidently a Galway man, with a touch of Lever and Lover about him. He produced, in the course of the evening, some whiskey odorous of the turf, that never could have paid duty, if the barbarism of whiskey duty could have existed in the princess of planets. He sang over his whiskey thus:—

"'Twas to the planet Mars
There came a wandering stranger,
Pleasantest of stars,
Where love is void of danger.

Here he came and said,
'I'm the man that's wittiest,
And I mean to wed
The girl that is the prettiest.
Now, my sweet,
Ere jealous fancy rankles,
Show your dancing feet—
Show your deer-like ankles.'

So the stranger sang:
All the girls came running,
For the rumours rang
Of his wondrous cunning.
Peggy showed her breast;
Ella showed her shoulder;
Some among the rest
Grew a trifle bolder.
'Ah! he cries,
Well I know my own love;
She shows her eyes;
Their light's enough alone, love.'"

Barney Brallaghan in Mars! What next? Ah! 'tis a planet wherein one doesn't expect any logical or continuous *next*. This is the charm of it. Calculate what is sure to happen—it won't. I like Mars.

And I also liked Kathleen, Mike's daugh-

ter, a merry girl, who fell in love with Big Dog on the instant. I wish I could sketch Kathleen. She was a big lump of a girl, with short curly hair, and merry eyes, and a widelaughing mouth, and a fre ckled face, and strong red arms, that were meant for work, and short petticoats, that revealed stalwart red legs which seemed to need no concealment. She was barefooted; her hair was a bunch of fuzziness; her eyes were immoderately funny. She'd a right musical voice for all that, an inheritance, probably, from her father; and I confess I was delighted when she sang me a song to the tune of *Peg of Limavaddy.*

"Tell me, if you can,
Where's the scene so rich in
Fun, since Earth began,
As an Irish kitchen?
Here the baby crows;
Here the girls get frisky;
Here the master knows
Where to find his whiskey.

Here the stranger who
Of Ireland may be scorner,
Wet and tired and blue,
Finds a cosy corner.

"Burns the fire of peat;
Laugh the lasses merry;
Ah! their lips more sweet
Than perry are, or sherry.
Treat them well, I crave,
Even though a poet:
If you misbehave,
I' faith, they'll let you know it.
An Irish maiden's waist
Was not made for folly:
Nobody more chaste,
Though nobody more jolly.

"I would never take
A kiss from any stranger.
I, for love's own sake,
Would go through direst danger.
Here I sit and sew,
Putting many a stitch in,
But fair dreams will glow,
In the old inn-kitchen.
And I think, think I,
One tires of Larry and Thady;
O will nobody try
To make Kathleen a lady?"

As Kathleen sang this curious song I looked round the room. The old inn-keeper dozed in his elbow-chair, with a glass of whiskey on a round table by his side. His wife, on the opposite side of the fire, was half asleep. Kathleen was kneeling on a fragment of heathrug, with her hand on Big Dog's curly mane, as she sang her song. The scene was amazingly characteristic. Kathleen especially, bare armed and legged, with the shortest of petticoats, was a thoroughly original figure. I remember that I shut my eyes to think over the situation.

When I opened them, that situation was changed. The room was no longer an inn kitchen, but an oak-wainscoted parlour of the most ancient style. Black was the oak, lofty the wainscot, wondrously carven the ceiling. Mike was an elderly gentleman, of aristocratic guise; Mike's lady was a pretty

patrician, with diamonds on her white neck; Mike's daughter, Kathleen, was exactly the Kathleen I had seen when I closed my eyes, but with the whitest skin, and pearls in her hair, and grace in every movement. Her skirts had lengthened, but her eyes were as bright as ever. Only Big Dog was unchanged. I don't know whether he understood that something had happened, but he left Kathleen, and came and laid his huge tawny head upon my knee.

Then I thought to myself, is this fine fellow a dog, or is he Proteus himself in canine guise? The old Greek legends came back to me with marvellous distinctness. I saw that old man of the sea beneath the shining marble cliffs of Earth's most lovely islands, sought (too often vainly) by those who desired the aid of his prophetic power. Verily I was now in a Protean planet, where I could only resign

myself to my destiny, and regard the whole phantasmagoria with as much calmness as I could command. After all there are transformation scenes recorded in all the mythologies of Earth. After all, there is no transformation more marvellous than that of a baby into a man, than that of a man into a bodiless spirit. Who could guess the fluttering Psyche, the gauzy fly of summer, from caterpillar or chrysalis? Who would dream of swift flight and sweet music hidden in the egg that is fated to change to merle or mavis? If the wonders of Earth are innumerable, why need I be amazed that there are countless marvels in other orbs?

While I meditated, my host and hostess were still dozing; but Kathleen, rising from the lion-hide which lay before the fragrant wood-fire, went silently to the table, and filled me a Venice glass of ruddy

wine from a silver jug. She gave me a gay look, placing finger on lip, to indicate that her father and mother might as well sleep on. I took the hint, and the wine. It was of some vintage quite unknown to me, with a fragrant bouquet, like the scent of lilies-of-the-valley, and a fresh clear flavour, that reminded me of the mountain strawberry. It had an instantaneous effect on the brain, causing the faculties to grow apprehensive and forgetive.

"Shall I show you?" she said, "the secrets of this place? It is the Cave of Transformation. We are never long the same."

Leaving the old folk to their doze by the fire, Kathleen touched a spring, which opened an unseen door in the panel, and I and the dog followed her through a long stone passage in an imperfect light. It was a winding corridor, and seemed to be end-

less; but Kathleen tripped gaily in front, singing nonsense verses to the air of "The Groves of Blarney."

Presently we reached a flight of steps, and the light grew less indistinct, and we ascended the lofty marble stairway. Brighter grew the light from above, until it rose to a radiance like that of Earth's electric lamps as we reached the platform on the top. On this landing stood a tall man, with a drawn sword in his hand, and a lion motionless beside him. He was prepared evidently to bar my way. Looking at Kathleen, I saw that she also had in her hand a sword, which she gave me with a smile. In an instant we were engaged in mortal combat, while Big Dog flew fiercely at the lion. I had no chance of rescuing the poor fellow from his unequal antagonist, for my opponent gave me as much as I could do. He was as strong as Belzoni, and fenced as

skilfully as Angelo. But a passionate faith in successful adventure had seized me, and at last, with an upward lunge, that is so dangerous in its failure that few dare try it, I ran him right through the throat. He fell instantly. To my surprise Big Dog was also a victor—his feline foe lay panting in death.

"Hurrah!" cried Kathleen. "My wine gave strength to your wrist and keenness to your eye. Let us leave those carcases behind, and make our way on."

Vast double doors of malachite swung open as we advanced, and I saw a lofty hall that seemed crowded with life. The whole floor was covered with groups of strangely-dressed people of various countries, and classes, all joyous and brilliant; there was music somewhere of the most rapturous rhythm, but I saw no orchestra. The hall,

so immeasurable that it seemed to me Saint Peter's at Rome might have stood within, leaving ample space every way, was lighted from the centre of the roof by an enormous diamond, impregnated with pyrogen. Great trees covered with marvellous blooms stood in all the niches; beautiful birds sang on their branches, or drank at the innumerable fountains that cooled the sultry air.

"There are old friends of yours here," said Kathleen, as we walked leisurely through the brilliant eccentric groups.

Verily I found it so. At a small table by a fountain there were a group of six, different enough, yet in eager conversation. The subject, as I heard, was matrimony. A prim elderly gentleman in spectacles (known in his youth as Cœlebs) was declaring that he had never known happiness till he found the wife he so long had sought; she

sate beside him, smiling approval, in a dowdy dress much too short for her, and her face reminded me of Mistress Hannah More. Close beside them, sipping sherbet and placidly listening, was a man of youthful beauty, in the Eastern dress—it was Prince Zeyn Alasnam, and in his hand he held the slight fingers of the pure and lovely Princess whom he valued far more than his eight golden statues. In quaint contrast with these were the other two; a charming Greek girl, looking into the olive face of a daring cynical dark-eyed young Spaniard, who drank his wine freely, and suddenly broke into song:

"O Madrid, thou pleasant city,
Where such merry deeds I did!
Damsels gay, duennas witty,
I have known in thee, Madrid.
Owner of the ninth gold statue,
If you'd keep a quiet brain,
Let no girl throw glances at you
In the throbbing heart of Spain.

"Island of the pirate-cutter,
Where foes frown and dear eyes smile!
There's no poet who could utter
Half thy beauty, perilous isle.
Dingy Cœlebs, drab and drowsy,
From your prosy nonsense cease,
What care I for females frowzy,
Who have won the Flower of Greece?"

"The Don seems as audacious as ever," I said to Kathleen.

"And Haidee as pretty," she replied.

We passed on. Four persons of the male sex formed the next group that attracted my notice. They were close to a very spirited statue of the god Pan, placed on a superbly-carved pedestal, around which the delicate hand of the sculptor had placed numerous figures of satyrs and fauns and flying nymphs. On a table were great piles of salt meats and fish, with plates of chives, leeks, onions, garlic, eschalots, flanked by several huge bottles of wine

The figure seated by this table might well draw attention. He was of gigantic stature and noble countenance, and wore royal robes; the only anomaly in his costume was a hempen rope, by way of girdle. Opposite him stood a handsome man in the dress of a student, who was turning out his pockets in a ludicrous pantomime, to show he was penniless. The royal giant laughed and drank, then looked around at a short stout Spanish peasant, who stood a little way back, and who said,

"Your Excellency, money is dross, therefore it becomes not the dignity of princes to retain it. They should bestow it on the viler sort."

Then the fourth person in the assembly, a French doctor, who looked infinitely learned, said, like an oracle,

"Whether we have money or have not, this is the best of all possible worlds."

"Rabelais, Cervantes, Voltaire," I thought . . . "*πανουργία*. The governors of Salmagondin and Barataria in company. Verily the Prime Ministers of Earth should be here to learn lessons of politics."

After all, I doubt much whether Gladstone, Bismarck, MacMahon, and the rest, have sufficient intuition to learn much from Pantagruel, Panurge, Sancho Panza, and Pangloss. The right Premier of England is Pangloss: the right Premier of Germany is Panurge: but what is to be done with the other two? Is there any country on Earth worthy to be ruled by Pantagruel? How could he manage Ireland? Would he make a swift end of Jesuit and Fenian, of murderer and libeller?

Another group of four, on divans, lazily drinking coffee. One a girl of the Dudu type, her eyes half open, her arms thrown above her fair-tressed head . . . Brynhild

the sleeper, whom Sigurd awoke. Over this Teuton giantess drooped fronds of fern, and it seemed each moment as if she would drop back into that dreamless slumber of centuries, whence she was awakened by a kiss. Old habits are hard to conquer. When one has slept a century or two, a single kiss has scarcely sufficient awakening power. The result of a continuous series might be different.

A couple of unquestionable Dutchmen, Peter Klaus and Rip Van Winkle, lay half awake on two other divans; the fourth was occupied by a man with a glorious Greek face, poetic and philosophic. He also seemed almost in a trance; but, when I passed, he fixed his eyes on me. Then suddenly he arose, left his companions, and came to where I stood, accosting me. I turned round to look for Kathleen; she had vanished in the innumerous crowd, and

was untraceable. Big Dog kept close.

"I fell asleep one summer afternoon," said the Greek, "in a cavern of the happy Cretan hills, and slept fifty-seven years. I awoke refreshed—I awoke wiser. While thus I slept Zeus rained upon me knowledge. When I came back among a people that remembered me not—how should they?—I could teach them things of which they had never dreamed. As sunshine brings to a man health, passing into him through the pores of his skin, so Apollo the Far Worker had drenched my sleeping spirit with the light of thought. Do you guess what I learnt there?"

"Yes," I answered, "O Cretan. You learnt that, when a man cannot think, God thinks for him."

"True," said Epimenides. "Now tell me, are you awake or in a dream? Look across this hall of wonder, and say."

I threw myself on a couch and looked around. Assuredly it was a hall of wonder. No pen could describe the gay groups that fluttered through it. Mephistopheles was looking for Faust; ugly Riquet with the Tuft was good-humouredly searching for the Princess on whom he was destined to confer wit and beauty; step-mother Grognon, armed with a birch-broom was lamely running after pretty Graciosa, who with dishevelled hair was seeking her protector, Percinet. Myriads of such legends were enacted before my astonished gaze.

And on the walls there were great pictures, gloriously painted. I beheld Avalon. I heard Arthur say,

> "I wylle wende a lytelle stownde
> In to the vale of Aveloone,
> A whyle to hele me of my wounde."

O the wondrous orchard bloom of that strange solitary place whither the ladies of

old romance brought with many tears the wounded swordless king! I have seen Mr. Millais paint apple blossoms since, but he could not touch the artist of Mars. A great Minster rose amid the dim deep orchards: and they laid Arthur in the tender grass beneath a most ancient tree: and soft hands tended him, and sweet song rose around him.

As I gazed that picture vanished. In its place came an admirable sketch of Captain Lemuel Gulliver, in the famous City of Lilliput, with crowds of pigmies gazing up at the monster. The artist had given Gulliver an air of contempt for these small people, that would have done credit to a Prime Minister. Turning the other way, I saw a picture that made me shudder. I saw myself lying dead at Beau Sejour, with Lucy kneeling by my side. This strange picture also vanished, and in its place I saw two cradles with a baby in

each, and the mother and nursemaids watching them. The mother's face seemed to me to have in it something familiar.

Then I answered the question of Epimenides with a counter question,

"What difference is there, O Cretan, between being awake and being in a dream? That surely you must have learnt during the fifty-seven years you unconsciously inhaled or imbibed the wisdom of the universe. I retort on you your inquiry. Were you awake or dreaming all that time in that Cretan cavern? Were you awake or dreaming when you afterwards set up a respectable household in Crete, but brought your pretty daughter Iphis up as a boy instead of a girl? Come: you are a philosopher: define being awake: define being in a dream."

Epimenides looked slightly puzzled. He said,

"There is a friend of mine who could

help us through this bit of metaphysic. You have heard of Merlin?"

"O yes. He is wisest of all you lovers of sleep. He dreams of Vivian under the great oaks of Broceliande.

'O, happy happy Merlin!
Afar in the forest deep,
To thee alone of the sons of men
Gave a woman the gift of sleep?'"

"Let us leave this, and go to him," said the Cretan sleeper. He and I and the mighty mastiff at once left the hall by an entrance near us, and passed into what seemed a new world.

Miles of open green, virgin turf, with enormous trees at wide intervals. It was now just sunrise. Although I had not slept I felt sleepless. The Greek and the dog looked far wearier than I felt: but as to Epimenides, he had contracted an early habit of sleeping.

The sunrise, a wondrous vision of colour and form unutterable, wherein any poet would imagine a myriad pictures, wherein any wise man would see the handiwork of God, slanted lovingly through the broad-leafed oaks, turning all their innumerable dewdrops into diamonds and sapphires and rubies and emeralds. Songs of birds filled the air with melody. Else there was an awful hush upon the forest, a silence that might be felt, a solitude that a guilty soul might dread. Often have I thought that any man who had committed a great crime should be in mortal fear if he went anywhere alone.

Put the hypothesis. I will not take murder into count: but say you have built your prosperity on fraud . . . say you have ruined a girl for your mere pleasure. Can you walk alone into a quiet wood, and tread upon the carpet of last year's leaves, and

have no fear of meeting, in that beautiful yet awful solitude, the Almighty Avenger? Perhaps I put the question thoughtlessly; perhaps the men who commit such abominations are incapable of belief in God, and therefore incapable of fearing him. Pillory or the cat was meant for them.

Merlin, an aged man, seven feet high, with a white beard that fell below his waist, leant against an oak-tree, with a crutch of ivory in his right hand. On one finger of that hand burnt a light-giving carbuncle. He looked at us, and said,

"Welcome to the forest."

"Our friend, just fresh from Earth," said Epimenides, "wants to know whether he is awake or in a dream."

"No," said I, promptly, "that is not a fair way of putting it. You asked me which. I ask you, in return, whether there is any

difference between waking and dreaming? If so, what is that difference?"

There was a humorous twinkle in the British prophet's eye; he saw that the Cretan was puzzled.

"It does not matter to me," I went on, "whether I am awake or asleep. In either case I see certain persons and places, and certain adventures happen to me. In either case I enjoy existence, and always mean to enjoy existence. Still, as a mere ontological problem, it might be worth while to ascertain whether there is any difference between sleeping and waking; and, if so, whether we are asleep or awake, we three?"

"The difference between sleeping and waking," said Merlin, "is purely imaginary. I have slept for more than a thousand years, yet all the time I lived. My mortal presentment was under the oaks of Broceliande. My self was in the world, fighting for truth,

and sighing for love. Have you ever known the right victorious? Merlin was there! Have you ever known a wedding of true love? Merlin was there.

'Yes, while the legend made me
Under great oak-trees sleep,
I was where bright eyes glisten,
I was where sad eyes weep.

'Oft when the happy lover
Toyed with his lady's hair,
Shadow of loves more ancient,
Merlin the Seer was there.

'Oft when the fierce fight thundered,
Making the myriads die,
Just for some crowned fool's fancy,
Merlin the Seer stood by.

'Once, when a people trembled,
Under a poet's power,
Merlin waxed glad, and wondered—
Was it the world's last hour?

'No: the great world rolls always
On through the ether deep.
Love! laugh! fight! cheat! swear! quarrel!
Merlin the Seer will sleep.'"

I had thrown myself on the turf under

a great tree; while Merlin broke out into a mixture of prose and verse, I had closed my eyes, and was listening. I think I have fairly reported him. But when his recitative ceased I opened my eyes . . . and behold he was not there! Neither was Epimenides of Crete. I was alone in the woodland, save for Big Dog, who blinked at me when I awoke, as much as to say,

"I'm very glad those two old bores are gone. Ain't you?"

I sometimes wish dogs could speak. I sometimes wish women couldn't. It is, however, rather difficult to realize a world of articulate dogs and inarticulate women. Should we gain anything from the former? Some of them, in gesture and gaze, make one believe they must be imprisoned spirits. On the other hand, suppose the women silenced. They could not scold, 'tis true, but then I have known men who liked

being scolded. And then they couldn't sing, and they couldn't say witty little things . . . such as nobody save a woman can say, for the wit of a man differs from the wit of a woman, not in degree, but in kind; it is the clear keen diamond against the pure round pearl; it is the foam of the tide against the sparkle of the fountain.

Big Dog got up, shook himself, and looked at me, saying, as well as looks can speak,

"Let's go on."

On we went through the free forest.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PATH OF PAIN.

Πόνου μεταλλαχθέντος οἱ πόνοι γλυκεῖς.

MY four-footed friend and I, escaped from the company of philosophers, trudged merrily along. It is true that both Epimenides and Merlin were poets as well as philosophers, and that both were famous illustrations of a truth seldom understood—that unconscious existence may be as fruitful as conscious existence. Still the analytic faculty predominated in each of them; and I, though admitting the necessity and the value of that faculty, care not to associ-

ate with those who possess it. Let my friends be owners of the synthetic faculty; let them create, and not destroy. How seldom has a woman any power of analysis; but all women of the first force have synthesis—and most women of the average. A girl does not analyse her lover, she creates him. Often enough she makes a huge mistake, and forms a hero out of a very ordinary clod; but sometimes she has power enough to find in her clod something really heroic, as the sculptor sees the statue hidden in his block of marble. A world in which women were analytical instead of synthetical is difficult to imagine; I suppose it would result in absolute Amazonism. Men would have to give way; the Amazon analyst would be omnipotent.

Reflective, I walk onward through the vast woodland, whose character changed as I advanced. Presently the great umbrageous

oaks gave way to tortured trees, almost leafless, which seemed to have been scorched by lightning—to great pines broken and splintered as if an avalanche had fallen on them —to blasted melancholy yews, beneath whose mournful shade hideous funguses caricatured all the most bestial shapes of nature. The change from the loveliness of the open forest to this weird scene made my spirit sink within me; and I felt that the air also had changed, that it was dense and turbid and loaded with evil vapour, that the light was yellow and dim, that there were unpleasant influences at work around me. Wretched reptiles wriggled through the scanty grass, hissing at Big Dog as he trod fearlessly among them But for that noble dog I should probably have turned back, and sought the forest again, and tried to get a breath of air with pyrogen in it. He maintained my courage, and actually ex-

hilarated me by his grand contempt for the toils of the way. The way had indeed become toilsome. The path rose slowly, growing steeper and steeper; as it grew steeper it also grew less pleasant to the tread, becoming a mixture of loose sand and sharp shingle. I began to think I was a fool to push forward; but Big Dog took the lead quite merrily; and I resolved to pursue my journey. The ascent was difficult; the atmosphere was oppressive; there were hideous croakings of questionable animals in the dense bush through which I had to force my way. Instead of the regal trees to which I had been accustomed, standing solitary amid soft green turf, with summits that seemed to seek the stars, and inhabited by birds of lovely song, I saw a dense undergrowth of prickly shrubs, bound together by ropes of immemorial brier, and haunted by slimy reptiles with innumerable legs, and hideous

black insects with stings. I grew athirst, but had there been a spring should not have dared to drink—fearing that it would be pregnant with miasma.

Long was the toilsome climb up that steep slope, where huge stones surprised the foot amid shifting sand; but last the summit was reached . . . and the sight I saw I never shall forget. The path downward was even a steeper slope; but at its foot there was a green valley with a stream running through it, and just beyond there rose a lofty mountain, its conical peak rosy at this moment with summer light. I might have seen it as I ascended the ridge, but the wearying path prevented my looking forward or upward. It is in travel as it is in life; trudge, trudge, trudge through the mud —or drudge, drudge, drudge for the muck they call money—and your eye will never look upward. You have no time to seek

the serene stars, or the mountain-cones that mingle with the clouds.

How to descend? It was only not perpendicular, this slope: a nasty shifting sandy stony soil, treacherous to the foot. I sat on the ridge meditating, reluctant to break my neck, and half wishing I had never left the many pleasant corners of this planet, in which I might so easily have remained. I grew melancholy in my loneliness; but Big Dog put his black muzzle into my hand, reminding me, in his affectionate way, that I had at least one friend. So I patted the old boy, and took heart, yet saw no way of reaching the lovely valley below without fracturing every joint of my body.

Suddenly Big Dog barked... a joyous eager encouraging bark. I looked up: his big brown eyes were fixed on something above us, that looked a mere speck in the sky. But approaching with incredible swiftness it

grew vaster in size, and I soon saw it was an immense eagle, huger far than any condor that ever screamed around the inaccessible summits of Andes.

It came straight to where I stood. And instinct told me that this was my mode of escape. As it hovered just below me I flung myself upon it, burying my hands in depth of feather, and was instantaneously carried down to the valley below. So swift was the descent that I was breathless, and could not have thanked my deliverer if even I had known the language of the eagles of Mars. Before I could recover myself the royal bird, shooting right upward, had become a speck in the limitless blue.

When I was all right again I looked for Big Dog. The dear old fellow had scrambled down the slippery head-long slope, and was racing across the green to meet me. After a bark of welcome he sprang into the stream,

and drank and cooled himself. I also drank: the wondrous water of Mars restored me on the instant.

Eager for rest, I lay upon the sweet fresh turf and slept . . . how long I know not.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PEAK OF POWER.

Οὐδὲν α ναύδατον φατίσαιμ' ἄν.

WHEN I awoke, there stood beside me Cheiron the Centaur . . . he who taught the son of Peleus and the daughter of Leda. Looking at me with friendly eyes, he said:

"I have been your companion in another form. I hope you were satisfied with your dog. Now I must leave you, only advising you to climb that mountain. It is the Peak of Power. Reach its summit, and you will be fortunate."

He neighed farewell, and cantered away across the emerald grass. I have not seen him since.

"So," I thought, "old Cheiron has aided me in the guise of a dog. I have reason to be proud. Few men have even known him, since the great days of the great wars of old. I will follow his advice. I will scale that mountain. What next, who knows?"

O how lovely was the loneliness of that sweet mountain-side! The first belt was vine, growing wild, yet producing grapes such as I never saw elsewhere. I afterwards discovered that the Peak of Power is a volcano, which accounts for the immense size and delicious quality of these grapes. They were a rich crimson, and about the size of an ordinary egg-plum; a stalwart porter would stagger beneath a bunch of them. I walked till eventide through this fair land of grapes; I saw no one; and,

when night came, I threw myself on the turf, and slept a sleep most perfect and profound . . . the sleep induced by thorough weariness of body or of mind. In such sleep there are no dreams; the immortal spirit folds its wings and is still; the mortal body does sweetly, softly, silently, its healthy easy work. Such sleep hath had praise from all men, from Sophocles to Sancho Panza.

Awaking with sunrise, which, in the atmosphere of Mars, is a sight indescribable for its splendour, unless indeed I had plenty of pyrogen, I drank of the brook, and ate a few giant grapes, and pressed forward. The next belt of land was studded with vast chestnut trees, such as Ætna never saw. Goats frolicked beneath them; and, at about noon, I reached the encampment of some goat-herds, and was glad to accept their free and limitless hospitality, I

had climbed some miles; I could see many of the strange places through which I had passed lying beneath me as if on a map; I felt tired of this volatile versatile planet, and was glad to be beneath a great chestnut, and eat goat's milk cheese and bread of chestnut flour, and drink a weak, yet most exhilarant wine, made newly from the grapes already described. Such entertainment had I among the goat-herds; and, when I lay upon the grass thereafter, the girls fanned me to sleep.

When I started again I came upon clear moorland . . . short sweet grass that has seldom felt the foot, and innumerable varieties of heather and broom and gorse. Trees gradually dropt away. Wild creatures, unknown to me, broke out of the ferns and furze. Birds sang wondrously. The planet below was a miraculous picture to me, who had caught the long-sightedness

of Mars. I pushed on; it was a case of *excelsius*, if I may correct American Latin; and, as I neared the grand pinnacle that crowned the hill, I saw that I had not yet got through my hard work.

The final peak was almost an erect cone, about three hundred feet high, and as smooth as glass. What was to be done?

I have never known how I attained the apex of that awful aiguille. There are times of physical effort so tremendous that it is only remembered as pure effort; what happened, and how it happened, perish from the memory. It was so with me on this occasion. I reached the keen summit of the mountain, and that is all that I can say. When there, I was so worn with the terrible toil, that I lay awhile . . . how long I know not . . . and slept upon the grass. For even on that solitary summit the grass grew green and soft.

And when I awoke, and looked on leagues of Mars lying like a map beneath me . . . far, far beneath . . . I found close at hand a pure well of that water which stimulates while it refreshes. So I drank, and having drunken, felt as if there were no more troubles in the universe. Place a man on a mountain peak, and give him water to drink, with plenty of pyrogen in it, and if he grumbles at the course of events he deserves kicking.

Lying on the soft green grass, untrodden perchance by other foot since the planet Mars was created, I looked downward and meditated. Here I was, free to wander whithersoever I chose, pleasantly surrounded by strange fantasies, free from any kind of care; yet there came on me at intervals a sort of home-sickness, a longing for that native sphere where man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Mars is a lovely

planet, but it has its disadvantages. Creditors are unknown; scolding wives are unknown; nobody writes books; nobody reviews books. The tax-gatherer has not been invented, nor the bill-discounter, nor the popular preacher. There are no armies, no navies, no Parliaments. It is an uncivilized planet.

Somewhat thus did I muse as I rested on the summit of the Peak of Power, and looked down upon the wondrous world below. I was alone. I looked back upon what seemed a long residence in Mars, and was already weary of it. Its phantasmagoria was unlike the strong stern reality of Earth life. It had no maddening joys, no bitter griefs. It was an æsthetic planet.

Here am I, methought, on the summit of the highest of the hills of Mars. It is loftier than Mount Blanc, loftier than Chimborazo. I have got up here, somehow or other, with-

out much difficulty. If I had done such a thing on Earth they would have given me a pinchbeck medal, or put a lot of letters at the end of my name. They can't make me illustrious in that way in Mars, because nobody has yet invented an alphabet. No fellow can be F.R.S. in a planet where F and R and S are as yet unrevealed. I am safe. And indeed I am all the safer for being nameless. I left my name behind me on Earth, and have received no new one here.

As thus I reflected, high above the ordinary level of the planet, the day wore towards evening. It was the loveliest sight I ever remember to have seen. Far, far below the lucid lakes of Mars slept amid silent valleys; villages nestled in happy nooks; the world was fair, and free from turmoil. Yet as there I lay and looked upon the magical scene, something seemed wanting.

What was it? I have since guessed; it was the trouble of Earth.

Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. If he is set wholly free from care and annoyance he loses the strength of his fibre, the fighting power that belongs to him. A tranquil race may dwell on Mars happily enough; it is no place for the beings who commence existence by rebellion and murder. Believe or disbelieve the antique legends of Eden's garden, and of the death of Abel by his brother's hand; they are, at any rate, profoundly true in essence, as showing the character of the human race.

Turning from the scene below me, soft and serene, I looked into the western sky. There was a spiritual sunset. The clouds were of colours unimaginable, of forms that each instant changed. Low in the horizon there seemed a wondrous city of palaces, with great trees between them, and winding

streams—a sublimated Venice of the sky. Above this lay a bank of purple light, which gradually changed to crimson, to rose, to saffron, to a strange sad grey; and how blue was the sky behind this mass of colour! And lo one star!

That silent serene star, glimmering into stronger light as the chariot of Helios left its radiant dust behind it in the western sky, was . . . I knew it . . . Earth. It was my home. The strange long-sightedness of Mars, and the luminous power of the pyrogenized atmosphere, clear as a crystal filled with light, enabled me to perceive a less star beside it . . . the ever-faithful attendant Moon. As I saw, in the dim undiscoverable distance, these two planets, I felt upon me intolerable home-sickness. I thought of the solid Earth, where things seemed unchangeable. I thought of the lovely Moon, crescent or de-crescent, or glorious at the full,

in whose light so much folly has been sung and said. The Earth, with all its unquestionable disadvantages, seemed to me at that moment more attractive than Mars.

It was the first time I had formed a wish in Mars. In that orb there seemed nothing to wish for. Often has it occurred to me, reflecting on my curious adventures, that, if the formation of a wish involved its fulfilment, a good many odd things would happen.

In this case the wish was power. As I looked on Earth, brightening slowly while the sunset faded, I wished that I was there once more. The wish was sudden and strong. A moment . . . and I was utterly unconscious.

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